

**HISTORY OF
OTISVILLE
MICHIGAN**

1956

Paul L. Laing

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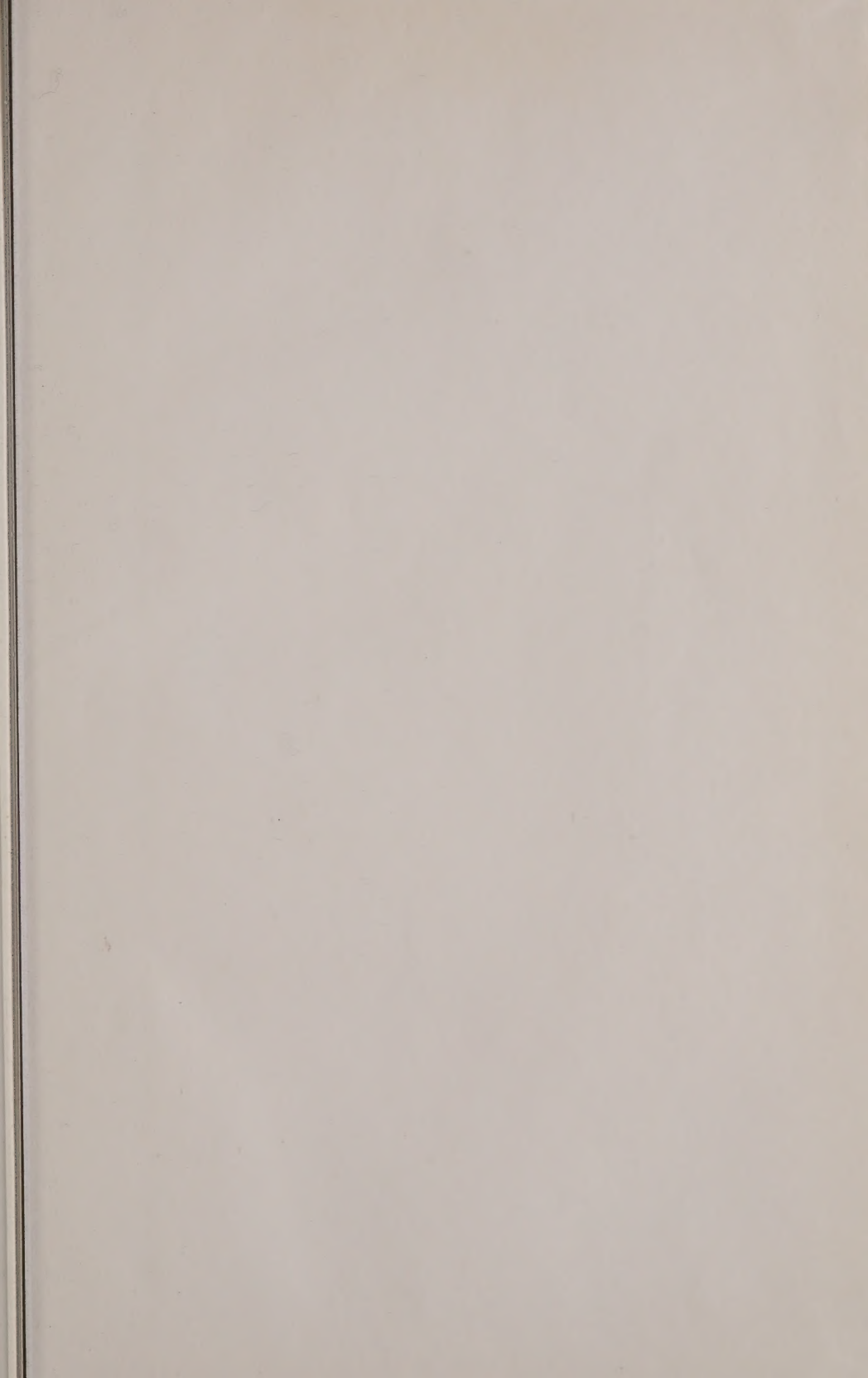


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HISTORY OF OTISVILLE MICHIGAN

1956

— by —

Paul L. Laing

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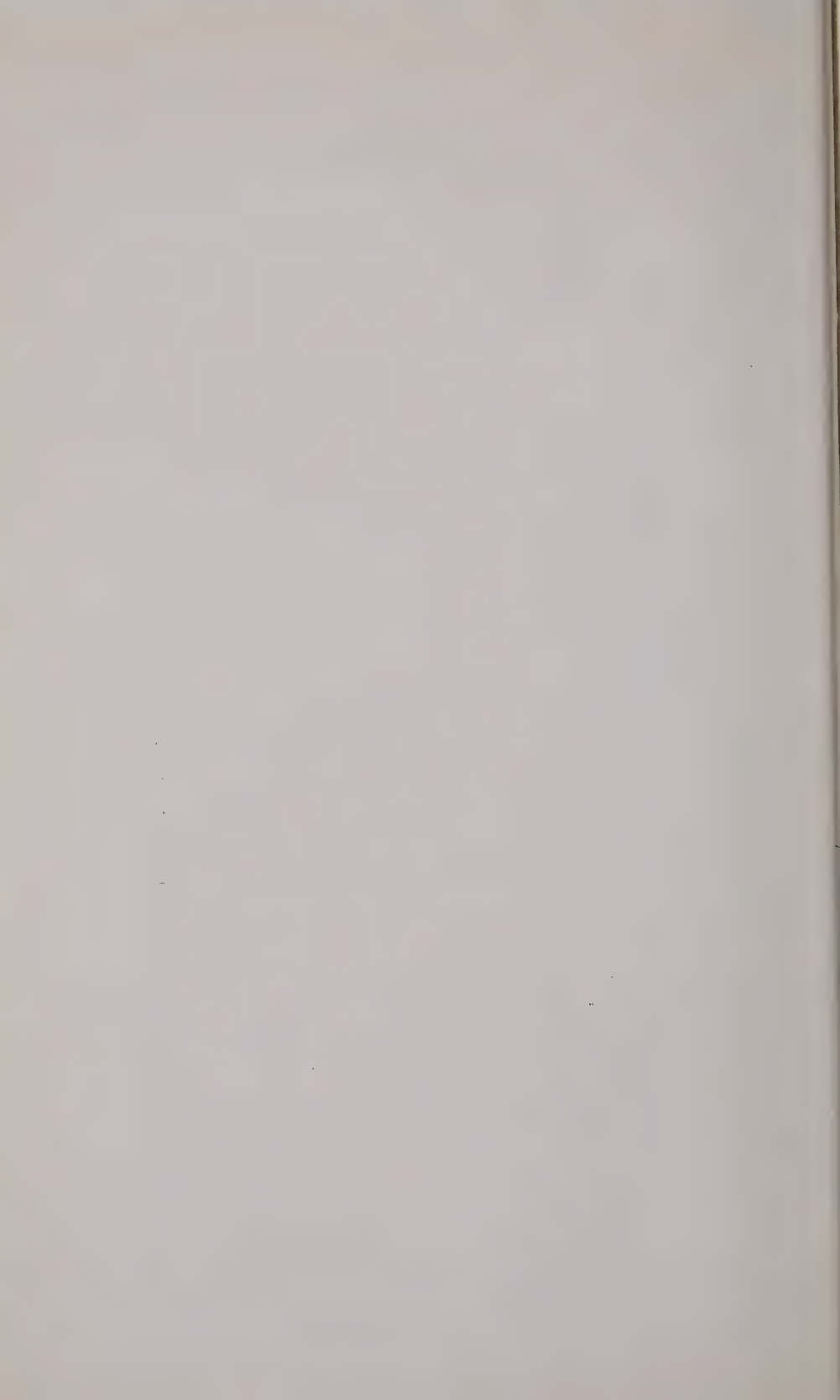
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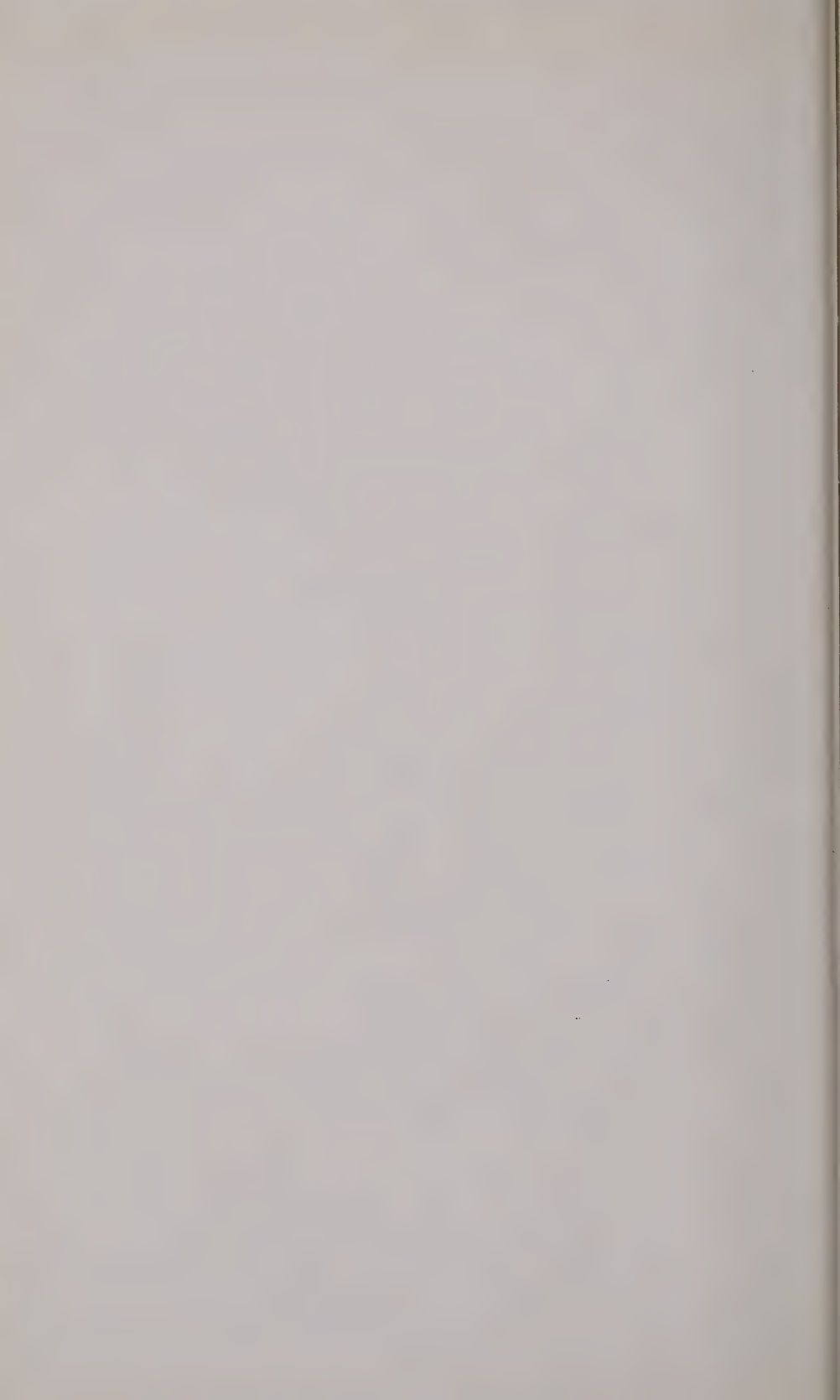
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Preface

All of you who may start to read this book should remember one thing. There never was a history written that was entirely correct in every detail. Every teacher of history will have to admit this statement. What I am about to write will be as carefully studied as possible according to the information I have and can get hold of.

As for the history of Otisville before it became an incorporated village, I have before me a "History of Genesee County" published in 1879. It is quite complete in recording the story of Otisville as an unincorporated community. In fact, it tells much of the first two years of chartered Otisville. From 1879 to 1925, for some unknown reason, there are few village records. I find quite complete records of the three churches active up to this date. I will do my best to get as complete records of our schools as possible. As for lodges and similar organizations, I will ask for their help. Beyond all these stated helps I will have to rely largely on personal memories. It so happens that I am the oldest male citizen in the village. There are three females, Mrs. Sarah Crawford, Mrs. Mary (Manie) Alexander and Mrs. Mabel Branch all older than I. They will be very helpful.

As for myself, I was born in a little house back of where the present corner store, now called Derr's Market, stands, on December 6, 1872. I have lived here eighty-four years and never had any other home. Otisville has been very good to me and mine. Our lives have been happy here—what more could one ask?

The history of Otisville might be written in three parts:

1. Otisville as a lumbering center up to 1880.
2. Otisville as an agricultural center from 1880 to 1935.
3. Otisville as an industrial center since 1935.

But to make the reading more interesting the parts will, at times, necessarily merge somewhat.

Lumbering Days—1851-1880

OTISVILLE AS A LUMBERING COMMUNITY

Here we will notice three names standing out prominently—Otis, Begel and Hunton. A Mr. Hayes built the first sawmill in Otisville and, in fact, in Forest Township. The Begels built two sawmills, stores and houses. Ira Begel built the Lake House which was, for a time, the building of first importance in the community. As for the Huntons, they came to Michigan from a lumbering center in Maine and bought a large part of the best pine land in Forest Township. With the Huntons came a cousin of Wellington Hunton, a Mr. Weeks. He could not have been in good health, for he soon sold his interest to the Huntons and moved to Flint.

Now right here let me explain that I realize we can't have this book filled with all dry matter such as dates and names. We must insert interesting incidents. As I sit here, writing, something comes to my mind relative to the lumber business that changed a life.

A young man by the name of Joseph Myles came into our community. He came from a family of wealth and importance in Ireland. Why he left home and came to America I do not know. I believe he came to Otisville from a lumbering community in Canada. He was well educated, but rather wild.

One morning A. K. Hunton was looking for someone to scale lumber to go into a freight car. Myles came up and offered to do the job. Hunton asked him if he had experience, and the young man said, "Yes," so Hunton took him to the car, gave him the scaling rule and watched for a while. Myles was not setting down any figures, so Hunton finally said, "How are you going to know how much lumber went into that car?" Myles replied, "Mr. Hunton, if my scaling is questioned at the other end of the line it will not cost you a cent!"

From that moment there was a strong—very strong—friendship between those two persons.

There was another who had much to do with Mr. Myles' life. A beautiful girl, a sister of Mrs. Silas Patten, saw so much good in Joseph Myles that she fell in love with him. She never rued the day, for it ended in a beautiful married life for two lovely people. (Joe Myles, to me, became Uncle Joe, for he risked his life to help save mine when I nearly died of diphtheria at the age of nine.)

The year 1851 was a momentous year for Otisville.

That year John Hayes came into what is now Otisville and brought with him machinery and a crew of men. On the south side of the outlet from the lakes on its way to Butternut Creek and the east side of State Road, he built a sawmill. He also built a house for himself and family, as did some of his mill hands.

There were already three houses in what is now Otisville. One was built by Stephen Begel, one by Amos Begel, and the third by Matthew McCormick.

In this third house was born the first male white child in Forest Township. Date, February 22, 1840. His name: John H. McCormick.

In 1852 Francis Otis bought the holdings of Hayes. The Otis family had already picked up a large amount of beautiful pine land in the township, according to the Genesee County History. In 1853 two brothers came to join Francis, at which time the Otis holdings amounted to five thousand acres.

In July, 1863, a fire burned the mill, but by Spring of 1864 a new and larger mill had been built, capable of sawing twenty-five hundred feet of lumber per day. In 1866, the mill, then owned by Otis and Crocker, was sold to Weeks, Hunton and Company, together with forty-two hundred acres on which the pine (most beautiful in the world, I believe), had not been touched.

The new firm operated the mill there one year, then moved it to about a mile and a quarter north of what is now Otisville. It was placed several rods west of the State Road, and on the south side of what might be called an arm of Butternut Creek. The creek was then dammed making a large millpond on which to float logs. We will have to think of this mill as a part of Otisville, because the office and loading deck were in the village.

In February, 1872, the mill burned. By May a much larger mill was ready to saw not only lumber, but also lath and shingles.

May I pause here to say, it was the energy, push and business ability of A. K. Hunton, together with the able help of the mill crew, that made it possible to have the new mill in operation by May of that same year.

By this time Weeks' health was failing and Wellington Hunton was aging, so their interests in the business were sold to the Hunton Brothers, A. K. Hunton and George E. Hunton.

A sizeable settlement had grown up east of the mill. There was a good-sized boarding house, several family houses, a small schoolhouse and two good-sized log stables to house teams that came from a distance in winter to draw logs. This settlement was called Hunton Mill.

Now a story that is really history comes to mind, because it shows the wonderful stamina and resourcefulness of the lumbermen of those days. One day, in A. K. Hunton's office, the question came up about what big things our lumberjacks could do. Finally A. K. spoke up: "I will wager ten dollars that Bill Smith and Wall Osborn can saw twenty-four cords of wood in a day (a day meant ten hours).

The crowd rather laughed and covered the bet.

Remember, the two men were to SAW the twenty-four cords. When the big day came, Bill and Wall had their logs in a pile. A couple of skids led down to where they were to stand and saw. They had men ready to place the logs on the skids and roll them down to the sawyers. There were also men to split and pile. Uncle Chris Osborn, who was the filer at the mill, was to keep the saws sharp. One log was in place for the start. Finally came the word "go." Back and forth went the saw, cutting deep with

every draw. The blocks were dropping fast. The axe men and the pilers had to work fast as did Uncle Chris, and it was good for him that he had several saws in the best of shape before the work began.

One hour passed. Two hours. Then three, four and five, and still Bill and Wall were drawing a saw back and forth—back and forth—and the saws were still cutting deep at every draw.

The sixth hour passed. Only a few minutes more, then the pilers called out:

“Twenty-four cords!”

What men those lumberjacks were! Of course the twenty dollars went to Bill and Wall—ten dollars each.

In 1874 a fire burned the building housing A. K.'s office on the second floor, together with E. S. Swayze's drug store to the east. By 1875 a new store had been built by Hunton Brothers with a new office on the second floor for A. K. Also, A. K. had built the largest and finest house in town.

Soon after the new store on the corner had been built by Hunton Brothers, E. S. Swayze built his new drugstore with a hall on the second floor. He built this with solid brick walls. Since 1903 this building has been owned by Otisville Lodge No. 401, F.&A.M. Mr. Swayze bought the Silas Patten store building, moved his drugs to it and added groceries to the stock.

Now back to 1851. While Hayes built the first sawmill in Otisville, he did not build the only one. In 1867, Ira Begel built a fair-sized one on the shore of the lake somewhat back of the Lake House Hotel. The slabs from the logs were piled on the west shore of the lake, making what was called a dock. That gave the name to Dock Lake. This name still stands. In about 1870 this mill burned.

Begel had built in 1864 a smaller mill not far from the site of the larger one just mentioned, but I cannot find accurate description of the exact location. Long, long ago, it was told to me that it stood on the south side of the little lake between Dock Lake and McCormick Lake. Mrs. Alexander now says “yes”, and its sawdust said “yes” when I was young.

Somewhere between 1851 and 1859 a foundry had been built by S. F. Kellogg and R. W. Woodruff. In 1859, Woodruff sold his interest to Kellogg. In 1860, Otis and Crocker built a large grist mill on the west side of State Road and opposite their sawmill. So far as I can learn this grist mill was operated by Matthew McCormick Jr., and was sold to John H. McCormick in 1875, with Matthew McCormick still remaining.

Now, let's go back to 1851 when Hayes built the first sawmill within the confines of Otisville. In 1852, Lyman Crowl, then manager of this Hayes Mill, built a house facing what was supposed to be the south line of Main Street. In 1860-1861, Ira Begel and John R. Begel built a good-sized two-story building, with a store on the first floor and a hall on the second. After this store had been built, Ira, who was considerable of a surveyor, re-surveyed what is now Main Street and found that the store

stood about two rods south of where it should be, as did the Crowl house. Both buildings had to be moved. The Begels moved the store to the south line of Main Street and sold it to E. C. Freeman, where it stood until 1903, when it burned. The Crowl house was sold to Asher Look, who moved it south facing the (now) village park, and added a wing on the west side. This house is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Crawford (druggist Crawford.)

In the early 1850's George Reed built the first hotel in Otisville. He named it "American House." It was built on the exact spot where the brick hotel stands today.

In 1867, Ira Begel built the Lake House, and the next year added a large hall to the north end of the hotel. This hotel stood at the east end of Main Street. Its hall was, for a few years, a sort of community center. Elections, shows, dances, in fact about all the big indoor events, were held there. It was strictly a temperance hotel, and its good management was never questioned.

The American House must have been, for a short time, a temperance house, because a small store was in it at its start, but when Freeman bought the Begel store building he also bought what merchandise was in the hotel store part.

It must have been about 1875 that the American House was purchased by two brothers, Thomas and Frank Branch, who enlarged it, furnished good beds and excellent meals, mostly to salesmen who struck town quite regularly. Some of them came every two weeks, some every month and some about four times a year. Drygoods salesmen came with several large trunks, for it took at least a good day's work to display all their samples.

In 1875, Mr. Kellogg sold his foundry to M. S. Prescott, who converted it into a furniture factory. Soon after, Mr. Prescott sold to Silas Patten, who converted it into a broom handle factory until 1878, when it was used, for a time, as a storage place while he had a new broom and peavy handle factory operating by the railroad, across North Street from the depot.

By this time Mr. Patten had become a man of much importance in Otisville, for in addition to this factory he was running a stave factory to the west of the depot and on the same side of the railroad as the depot, and also a general store. This store building must have been built shortly after the Freeman store had been moved. It stood a few rods west of the Freeman store and on the same side of Main Street. It was a two-story building about the same size as the Freeman store. The second floor was used for living quarters. The Pattens lived there, for a time, then moved to a large house on the east side of what is now Park Street. In the early 1920's this house was bought and remodeled by Fred Luskey, and is now occupied by some of the Luskey family.

According to the Genesee County History, the first schoolhouse was built here in about 1845, but that date can hardly be correct as there were only three houses in Otisville in 1851. The schoolhouse stood on the west side of the State Road and near the southern border of what is now Otisville. The year 1854 would

be a more acceptable date.

When Dr. Rogers recorded his plat in 1866, its map showed a reserve school site. In 1867, a good-sized three-room school-house was built on the reserved location at a cost of about one thousand dollars. Lumber and labor cost little in those days. Not long after this school was built both the Dimond and Henderson School Districts voted two hundred dollars each to build schoolhouses.

In 1951, before Otisville took over the Town Hall to convert it into a joint village and township hall, I (personally) spent three weeks sorting out from the old township papers I found in the old secretary all those I thought should be saved. The rest of the papers I threw into boxes and showed to the Township Board at the next meeting. At that meeting the Board looked over the many discarded papers and found nothing they considered of value, so told me to burn them. They also looked over the papers I had saved and voted to keep them in the Historical Room in the Genesee County Court House. Mr. H. P. Williams, our supervisor, took them to Flint for safekeeping. I had previously bought a box from the M. E. Carlton Company suitable for holding them, so they were turned over to the Historical Society in our box.

The action of the two school districts to build is shown by their notices to the supervisor to spread the two amounts on the tax roll. These notices are in the box.

I will mention a few bills I found:

A supervisor's bill for the entire year's work ..	\$10.00
A clerk's bill for his year's work	0.01
Another supervisor's bill for year's work	25.00
Abel C. Smith's bill as supervisor, about 1880 ..	\$50.00
(Smith's bill was so beautifully made out that it demands special notice).	
A bill for two child's caskets (diphtheria)	\$12.00
A bill for an adult casket	\$21.00
A township officer's bill for trip to Flint for the Township	1.50
(That was for self and horse and buggy)	
A school inspector's bill, self and horse and buggy (one day)	1.50

In those days, townships had two school officers relative to schools: a school superintendent, and a school inspector. If a person wanted to get a license to teach he had to go to the superintendent. He would give a short oral examination, and, if he liked the applicant, he would get a license. Fred Smith, a son of Abel C. Smith, was one of the teachers who taught at Hunton Mill. He was proud enough of his license to keep it all his life. I presume that the signature of W. H. Begel, Superintendent, added much to his high regard for it, as Begel was a very popular teacher and Fred must have been one of his pupils.

W. H. Begel was one of the township school inspectors, and

one of the bills mentioned above was his.

The following citations are from Mrs. Jennie Herrick's diary, dated 1852:

Man's wages	75c to \$1.00 per day
Man with team	1.50 per day
Man with son	1.00 per day
Man's board for six days	1.50 per week
There were several such items as store charges:	
1 pound cheese	\$.07
1 pound tea .. .. .	.75
1½ gallons molasses	1.12
1 pair pants	2.00
1 pair pants	1.50
½ pint brandy .. .. .	.15
1 pair suspenders .. .. .	.25
1 pound soda .. .. .	.07
1 spool thread .. .. .	.06 (\$.05 1905)
1 pound tobacco .. .. .	.38
3 candles .. .. .	.09
8 yards print	1.25
1 pair gloves .. .. .	.25
1 pair cotton socks .. .. .	.25
2 yards apron check .. .. .	.41
1 pair man's boots	1.75
1 pair man's boots	2.25
1 pair women's boots	1.37
10 yards sheeting	1.00
8½ pounds pork .. .. .	.53 (.77 1905)
1 pair shoes	1.25
8 pounds nails .. .. .	.50
½ bushel salt .. .. .	.56
1 pound raisins .. .. .	.25
2 pounds coffee .. .. .	.28
49 pounds flour .. .. .	.75 (.90 1905)
2 yards calico .. .. .	.25
1 pocket knife .. .. .	.25
1 pound butter .. .. .	.18 (.18 1905)
4½ pounds codfish .. .. .	.32
1 hat .. .. .	.75

The 1905 prices—in parenthesis above—were taken from bills against Forest Township for groceries and meat furnished by the C. W. Phipps store. I tried to find in the 1852 diary what sugar cost, but I guess the price was too high for common people. I found none.

I did find in Mr. Phipps' papers where six bushels of potatoes sold for 90 cents. That was the year when buyers offered 10 cents a bushel here, while Millington was offering 12½ cents. By June, 1906, the price in Otisville was one dollar a bushel.

The following were listed as business notices in the Genesee County Atlas for Otisville in 1873:

L. N. Beagle, Physican and Surgeon.

A. B. Clark, Manufacturer of Carriages, Wagons, Sleighs and Cutters. General repairing done neatly and promptly.

S. H. Crowl, Bookkeeper.

Samuel A. Davison, Dealer in Pine Lands, Lumber, etc.

E. C. Freeman, Dealer in Dry Goods, Clothing, Groceries, Crockery, Hardware, Hats and Caps, Boots and Shoes, Paints and Oils.

G. E. Hunton, Manufacturer, Dealer in Lumber, Shingles, Lath, etc. Also merchant.

S. F. Kellogg, Founder, Manufacturer of Agricultural Implements and Cabinet Ware, also Undertaker.

C. E. Kingsbury, General Blacksmithing and Manufacturer of Carriages and Wagons.

F. B. Lowell, Proprietor of Steam Saw Mill and Farmer.

George W. Merriam, Dealer in Boots, Shoes, Rubbers and Ladies' Serge Goods, etc. & etc.

McCormick Bros., Merchant and Custom Millers, Dealers in Flour, Feed and Grain.

E. Ostrander, Painter, Paper Hanger, Glazier.

C. E. Osborne, Farmer and Manufacturer of Lumber.

George Reed, Notary Public and Attorney-at-Law, also Manufacturer of Sash Doors and Blinds.

F. G. Sheppard, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, etc.

E. S. Swayze, Druggist and Apothecary.

F. D. Swarthout, Manufacturer and Dealer in Harness, Bridles, Collars, Currycombs, etc. A good assortment of Whips, Lashes, Blankets, Robes, Trunks, Satchels, and nearly everything else in the line constantly on hand. All work warranted.

Edward Salsberry, Proprietor Livery Stable. Also Otisville and Mount Morris Mail and Stage Line, and Constable.

Weeks, Hunton & Co., Manufacturers of Lumber, Shingles and Lath. Also Dealers in General Merchandise.

Warren, J. H., Proprietor Lake House. A good barn is connected with the House. This House has been refitted and refurnished, and now furnishes first class accommodations to the public.

On March 21, 1877, our State Legislature passed an Act making Otisville an incorporated village. Its first election to be held on the first Monday in May at the Village Hall supposedly meaning the hall at the Lake House. The election notice so stated, but for some unexplained reason it was held in the office of John S. Elwell, Justice of the Peace. Subsequently, elections were to be held on the dates and places as now held.

The first officers elected were:

President: George Reed.

Clerk: Anthony D. Burnell.

Treasurer: Albert K. Hunton.

Trustees (1877): George E. Hunton, John H. McCormick, Christian E. Osborne, Ozias C. Swift, S. F. Kellogg, Eugene Ostrander; (1878) John W. Nicholson, Allen B. Clark, Charles Moon, Silas Patton; (1879) Robert B. D. Alexander, John B. Laing, Silas Patton.

(Trustees above just as given in the Genesee County History.)

Street Commissioner: H. O. Cheney.

Assessor: Allen B. Clark.

Marshal: Abram D. VanGordon.

Before me is an atlas of Genesee County, published in 1873. You have already seen a list of the business places in Otisville at the time the atlas was published as set down in the first part of this book.

Among the business places mentioned was that of George W. Merriam, "Dealer in Boots, Shoes, Rubbers and Serge Goods." Soon after the atlas was published Mr. Merriam died, leaving two sons and two daughters for Mrs. Merriam to raise. She was a capable manager, and thrifty, so she did a fine job of raising the family and educating them. For several years she kept a cow, which helped furnish food (the best of it) for four growing children. Before the last cow was sold three of the children had become self-supporting. The eldest son was a pharmacist, the younger son a telegrapher and the elder daughter a teacher (at the age of sixteen). Mrs. Merriam was also one of the town's finest dressmakers.

By now, Mrs. Merriam took time occasionally to help care for the ill outside of her family. She was often used by the Funeral Director to assist in the care of the deceased. To summarize: Mrs. Merriam was a very useful figure in the Village. She was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a member of the Ladies' Aid, and a much-respected lady. In fact, she left a record to be proud of. Mr. Merriam was one of the earliest trustees of the Otisville Methodist Church.

* * *

Before we leave the Lumbering Days, when the countryside was changing to agriculture, it might be well to mention five doctors: Rogers, who had our school system much in mind when he platted and recorded the second plat of the village, reserving

a large lot for a new school in 1866. The next year the school-house was built. Dr. Begel (or Beagle, part of the same family spelled it the first way, part the second way) remained a few years, then moved to Pine Run. Dr. Nicholson, after he had built his office soon moved from Otisville. There was no roaming blood in Drs. Laing or Lewis. Dr. Laing came to Otisville in 1871 and never moved away. Dr. Lewis was here a shorter period of time than the other four, but all of them knew what a daring, hard-working day-or-night life doctors experienced in those lumbering days.

(Turn to chapter on Doctors to read the stories of Doctors Laing and Lewis.)

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE OLD OTISVILLE

(Copied from a letter to Mrs. Mabel Branch)

"How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood,
Which fond recollections present to my view,"
The sighing of pines in the deep tangled wildwood,
The "cobble-knoll" hills which in boyhood I knew;
The pond and the creek—the old gristmill near it—
Where we'd wade in the creek, cross the pond on a log!
Though dangers were near there were none stopped to fear it,
While engaged in pursuit of the shifty bullfrog—
The "Basso Profundo," the agile bullfrog.

The old "swimming hole" with bottom so sandy,
Across Begel's Lake near the cranberry marsh,
Where we'd dive and do tricks on the springboard so handy,
Throw mud and tie clothes and do things that were harsh.
How we shouted and screamed as some lad would go under—
Of course it were best to be some other boy!
Do my schoolmates remember those antics, I wonder?
Those days so replete with unalloyed joy—
Such dashing and splashing, oh! ecstatic joy.

The little old schoolhouse where we gathered our learning,
Beyond the "big barn" on the road to Smith Hill;
Take me back to those scenes, says my heart in its yearning,
Let me lie in their arms till my soul gets its fill.
Once more let me grasp the warm hand of the teacher—
Though many the time it has caused me to smart—
The grandest of men, though not a large creature,
Though quite large enough to much wisdom impart,
For W. H. Begel could wisdom impart.

Ofttimes in my dreams I return to those places,
Meet up with the boys who were foremost in games;
How my heart fills with joy as I gaze in their faces,
How they seem to enjoy the repeating their names!
Bill Mudge and "Butch" Begel, who were always so merry,
Hope Clark and John Fuller were also the same,
"Vessie" and Andrew and Wallace and Jerry,
Were always the foremost in starting a game—
And those were the days when a game meant a game.

Though distance forbids our often returning,
To note your advancement, dear old Otisville,
Through friends we hear much of matters concerning,
How with buildings quite modern your streets seem to fill.
Build more and build higher, I care not how many,
Build out to the limits, as other towns do,
You cannot conceal from my memory any
Of the dear recollections—nor hinder their view.

"PATCH" KELLOGG.
Newberg, Ore., Feb. 16, 1909.

Agricultural Era and Industrial Era

THE 1880 OTISVILLE BUSINESS PLACES

When A. K. Hunton purchased Georgia pine land in and around 1880, Forest Township pine was virtually exhausted and the lumber interests changed to agricultural interests. If we started on the south side of East Main Street, the first business was the Rumbold (we pronounced it Rumbolt) Blacksmith and Wheelright Shop.

Then, going west the next was the fire hall with council room above.

Then we had to jump past the McCormick home, the Village Common, across the State Road and unoccupied lots to the old Freeman Store, owned by Stringer and Osband.

Then came a small store where Asher Look had sold groceries while he was postmaster and Township Treasurer.

Next followed the new Lansfield Store with G.A.R. Hall above.

Then, the Patten Store, the Wellman Furniture Store with living rooms above, the Elwell Harness Shop, the Parker and Adams Hardware Store with living quarters above, the Beemer Blacksmith Shop with I.O.O.F. Hall above and the Gott Meat Market with living quarters behind and above.

Last, on the south side of Main Street, was Dr. Nicholson's Office on the corner of Main Street and Woodward Avenue.

Going over to the north side of Main Street, the first business place, going east, is Dr. Laing's Office, purchased in trade with the Lansfields. Next, we come to a building used by Parker and Adams for storage and next to it a barber shop (ownership unknown to the writer). Then a jump to the Branch House, which has been mentioned before.

Now, across North Street and going east on Main Street, is the Nicholson Drug Store, then Bloomer's Printing Office where the first Otisville newspaper, The Otisville Star, was printed. The Bloomer Store, and next to that the E. S. Swayze Drug Store, with the Baptist Church Society occupying the second floor. Then, Prescott's Carpenter Shop, and last for Main Street, Mrs. Merriam's Dressmaking Shop.

Going north from Main Street on North Street we come to the Branch House Livery Stable, then up to the Depot.

On the east side of the street by the railroad stood the Patten Broom Handle Factory. West of the depot on the north

side of the railroad still stands one of the last of the sawmills, now sawing shingles. On the opposite side of the railroad track from the Patten Stave Mill—my memory says—the first buyer of grain in Otisville was George Reed in his unused factory.

You have already read of the Reed Sash and Door Factory. It was not operated long. The 1873 Atlas of Genesee County shows where the Reed Factory stood on what we think of as the north side of the Pere Marquette Railroad. Reed could have converted his Sash and Door Factory into storage for grain, although it could not be called an elevator.

Now going back to Main Street, and going south along State Road, was a Shoe Shop where shoes were both made and repaired. The owner and manager was Farmon E. Judson (the first name may be mis-spelled). Further south across the outlet from the lakes is the large Two Stone Grist Mill, owned by John H. McCormick. The Foundry, which stood north of it, has been wrecked or moved.

This completes the list of business places in the now incorporated (March 21, 1877 charter) Village of Otisville at the end of the Lumbering Period.

One of the early business places in Otisville was a red brick building directly across Main Street from where the writer of this history spent his boyhood days. It was a two-story building with a basement. The front of the first floor was a meat market. Behind the market and on the second floor were living quarters. I have not been able to learn who built it, but I believe it was built by a member of the Branch family, the senior Thomas Branch and two sons, Thomas Jr. and Frank. The basement was used for a saloon at first, and also for a jail.

In the early 1870's, the two Branch brothers, Thomas and Frank, purchased the American House and soon enlarged it to accommodate the traveling public. The name of the hotel was changed to the Branch House. In 1886, the frame building burned (see Fires), and was immediately rebuilt. It stands, with slight changes, to this day. The ownership of the building and business has changed a number of times since the Branch brothers sold. Robert Wade changed the position of the barn, and, while in the hotel, built a hall which was used for a time as a dance hall and on various occasions, even for the High School Commencement programs and other school events. Finally, with the old hotel livery barn, it was used by Joe Maschino for the sale of farm implements.

Before the State of Michigan took over the greater part of North Street in the rerouting of M-15 through Otisville, Maschino moved his business to the McComb Building back of the corner store, and the Wade Hall and Livery Barn were wrecked by the Gulf Oil and Gas Company.

These eras blend until it is impossible to tell when the first one ends and the second begins.

If we take 1935 as the year that industry brought more money into Otisville than agriculture, we won't be very wrong.

Let us return for a review of Otisville business places around 1880. Remember the Village was incorporated March 21, 1877. Its first President was George Reed; Clerk, Anthony D. Burnell; Treasurer, Albert K. Hunton; trustees, George E. Hunton, John H. McComick, Christian E. Osborne, Ozias C. Swift, Salvin F. Kellogg, and Eugene Ostrander; Street Commissioner, H. O. Cheney; Assessor, Allen B. Clark; Marshal, Abram D. VanGordon; Constable, Alexander A. Dingman.

Commencing on the south side of Main Street of East Otisville, where today stands the Community Hall, was a wheelright shop with a hall on the second floor. Attached to it on the west side was a blacksmith shop, operated by Charles Kingsbury. Nearby to the west was the Fire Hall with a Council Room above and a small jail to the rear. There was no other building until you had crossed the State Road, where the first business place you came to was the Freeman Store. A few rods further to the west was the Patten Store. Next came a furniture and undertaking store and then a harness shop.

By 1879, Parker and Adams had built a hardware store on the south side of Main Street, and had moved from the north side. Then came the Beemer Blacksmith Shop and Gott's Meat Market. Now we have to cross Jefferson Avenue. Going half the length of the block, we reach Dr. Nicholson's home. He had built his office on his corner next to Woodward Avenue.

Now, we cross Main Street to the north side and turn east. We cross Jefferson and come to the Mary Lansfield Millinery Shop. We have now reached very near to the time this shop was sold to Dr. J. B. Laing and made into his office, while the Lansfields moved to their new store on the south side of the street. We now reach the hardware building vacated by Parker and Adams. Continuing east we come to the R. Beagle Barber Shop. The next business place we come to is the American House under the new management of the Branch Brothers. Its new name was the Branch Hotel. The brothers were Thomas and Frank.

Crossing North Street (now M-15) we come to the Hunton Block. The lower floor was occupied by the Nicholson Drug Store and the upper floor by the Hunton Brothers' office. Next comes the Bloomer Printing Shop and General Store and then the Swayze Drug Store, the Prescott Cabinet Shop, the Foguli (spelling questionable) and last, the Merriam Dressmaking Shop.

In 1884, a building was constructed, the east third of which was occupied by White, the funeral director of Mt. Morris, the other two-thirds by Parker and Dunston, hardware merchants.

In 1900, McCormick and Laing rented the White portion. In 1901, they rented the part built by Parker and Dunston. In 1913, McCormick and Laing sold their business to Crawford & Laing (W. W. Crawford and R. J. Laing.)

In 1901 or 1902, Dr. Lewis bought White's one-third and moved his drug stock into it. In 1929, A. B. Crawford bought the drug stock and has continued to be the Otisville druggist to this day. He and his sister, Mrs. Eddison Davis, have been owners of the entire building since 1946.

There have been many changes in stores from 1907 to 1957. In 1907 there were five stores selling groceries on the south side of Main Street between State Road and Jefferson Avenue. Now, there is only one.

Today fresh meats have become a big part of the grocery business. In 1907 meat markets alone sold fresh meats. Then the meats sold in the grocery stores were bacon, smoked hams and bolognas. C. W. Phipps was the first meat market owner to add groceries to his stock. Now the one grocery store is the Derr Market, an IGA Store, a really good-sized, up-to-date store doing a very successful business on the corner where Main Street crosses M-15 (State Street through Otisville.) Of course, it is a self-serve store. Such a store was unknown here in 1907.

Most of the readers of this book will be much surprised to learn the stock in trade of the McCormick & Laing Store of 1907. I will detail it. It was a double store of two stories and a basement, with a hand-propelled elevator to carry big stock up and down. The main floor was stocked with dry goods, groceries, (no fresh meats), boots and shoes, men's clothing, including hats and caps, wallpaper, lamps and chimneys, kerosene (lots of it, for it was our source of light), light crockery, etc. In the basement were kept the large crocks (5, 10, 15, 20 and 30 gallons.)

The second floor was one large room stocked with furniture and caskets. For the first five working days of the week, there was a well-stocked wagon on the road with Ronald J. Laing as driver and salesman. He had one two-day trip when, with his stock well depleted, he would come in loaded with butter (in crocks) and eggs in crates. Cash was scarce in those days, and farmers traded butter and eggs, mostly, for their groceries.

Some typical prices for 1907 were:

Twenty pounds of sugar, \$1.00.

Two pounds Lyons Coffee, 25c.

One pound green tea, 40c.

One pound salted side pork, 10c.

Twenty-five pound sack of flour, 45c.

One pound of butter, 12½c.

One dozen eggs, 11c.

Funeral prices for 1900 were:

Baby's casket, box and service, \$20.00 to \$50.00.

Adult casket, box and service, \$25.00 to \$100.

(Vaults were not yet in use here.)

By 1907, funeral prices had become somewhat higher. The writer became a licensed embalmer in 1903.

CHURCHES

Methodist Church

The first Detroit Methodist Episcopal Conference was held in 1856. In 1858, a class was formed in Otisville which was then an unincorporated village. A temporary parsonage had been purchased, but in 1871 lots 4 and 5 of Rogers Addition were purchased and a real parsonage was built. It was in 1866 that the first church was built on the land equal in size to, and joining on the west side of, the reserved school lot.

The church faced Pine Street. For its day it was large with an extremely high ceiling, which was later lowered 3 or 4 feet to save costs of fuel and repair. The church was not dedicated until September, 1869.

The historical paper prepared and read by Mrs. Mabel Branch at the 25th anniversary of the building of the present church, names as charter members:

Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Dodge.
Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Freeman.
Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Burnell.
Mr. and Mrs. George W. Merriam.
Mr. and Mrs. S. F. Kellogg.
Mr. and Mrs. Amos Ranney.
Nathaniel Crawford.
A. Herrington.
David Burrett.
John Coley.
Richard Gossler.
Mr. and Mrs. Abel C. Smith.
John Goudy.

A history of this church would be far from complete without mentioning Elder Smart. He was Smart by name and smart by nature. There were no District Superintendents before 1900. They were all referred to as Elders. I believe the writer has it right when he says that there was a remarkable quarterly con-

fence held in the old church on a Sunday evening in 1891, with Elder Smart to give the evening sermon. At that time there was a Sunday morning service as well as an evening service.

When it came time for Dr. Smart to preach, instead of going behind the pulpit, he stepped in front and said, "I am not going to give you a sermon tonight." Something tells me this is the last time I will see you, so I am just going to talk to you."

The next day he was taken to Davison for another conference. Tuesday he was in bed with pneumonia, and on Thursday his end came. The funeral was from Central Methodist Church, Flint. On the platform with a host of elders sat a very close friend, Father Murphy, pastor of St. Michael's Church.

Father Murphy exemplified the brotherhood of man in his fine talk about two neighbors, Dr. Smart and himself. I presume you have probably guessed the nationality of Father Murphy by his name, and he was no exception to the accepted reputation of many of his countrymen, since he was very full of wit. For two years, while I was a junior and senior in Flint Central High School, I boarded with neighbors of Father Murphy and he and I went to the same barber shop for our haircuts. He always took the east chair and I took the one next to it.

One day I had just got into my chair when in he came. As he was about to get into his chair he said to his barber, "That is quite a business they have started the other side of the Island Bridge."

The Barber: "What is that?"

Father Murphy: "Raising frogs."

Barber: "I suppose for their legs?"

Father Murphy: "No, for their hops!"

In 1886, a Methodist Ladies Aid Society was organized to help in financing the needs of the church, and they were really helpful. They met regularly in the homes of members, but when they furnished meals, the Stringer and Osband Hall was the place. Quilting was a continual means of raising money for them.

In about 1898, Clinton D. Doane helped them in the purchase of a building on the north side of Main Street, and this was their home until the new church was built in 1920. Dinners, dinners, dinners! On each annual election, after the ballots had been counted for Township offices, the winning candidate for supervisor paid \$10, the winning clerk, treasurer and highway commissioner each paid \$5.00.

The \$25.00 was paid to the Township Treasurer, who turned it over to the treasurer of the Ladies Aid for treats of biscuits and maple syrup to the voters. For several years now these after-election treats have been discontinued.

The building became quite dilapidated and was eventually sold to the American Legion to be used for a meeting hall. A few years ago they sold it to William Banyas, who remodeled it to



OTISVILLE METHODIST CHURCH
(Built in 1920)



METHODIST PARSONAGE

accommodate a barber shop in front with living quarters in back.

It would not be right to include a history of the Otisville Methodist Church without mentioning two names: first, F. E. Dodge, a charter member, and second, John Branch.

The early days of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Otisville were troubled ones, as far as financing was concerned, and there came a day when the burden fell heavily on the shoulders of Mr. Dodge. His dreams were anything but pleasant. His name was personally signed at the foot of a one-thousand dollar note, and the payee was threatening for payment. A. G. Blood happened to be pastor in 1877 and 1878, and he was an artist in raising money. He made arrangements for two excursions, one to Bay City, and one to Lansing.

Mrs. Mabel Branch took in the excursion to Bay City and remembers it well. I, together with Father, went to Lansing. The baggage car was in the care of the caterers, and they were numerous. Back and forth they went through the cars selling popcorn, peanuts, candies, gum, lemonade. What a time! The cars were crowded, and everybody was joyous. When results were reported, Mr. Dodge's bad dreams vanished.

The second person, John Branch, built the brick house on Irish Rd. between Wilson and Dodge Rds. He was a layman who did some preaching in his day, and he was the man to whom the stewards looked to balance the budget at the end of the church year. The writer remembers (I was in my early teens then) how he went into his pocket for \$40 to make up the finances needed. That amount was a lot of money in those days. I hope those two men will never be forgotten by Otisville Methodists. F. E. Dodge and John Branch should have a memorial.

On November 29, 1919, about 6:00 P.M., a cyclone hit the church, took off the high steeple and all the east part of the church roof, jumped over the schoolhouse and five dwellings. Then it tore a small outhouse from its floor as if it had been cut off with some sharp instrument—and where it was carried no one has ever learned. This cyclone started the formation of the Builders Class, in which Mrs. Ralph Hayes (Mabel) and Mrs. Ronald Laing (Elsie) were particularly active. Miss Grace Swayze was the teacher.

In order to build the new church on lots 4 and 5 the former church lot and the parsonage were sold to the Otisville Realty Company. The large barn was sold to Melvin Winchel. As is usual when pledges are taken at time of dedication, they were not all paid. The church was in debt. This debt was not all paid off until just before January 16, 1938, when a ceremony was held at the burning of the mortgage.

In 1939, there was a merger of the three Methodist organizations: the Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South, and Methodist Protestant Churches. The new name is The Methodist Church. At the time of the Union, the Ladies' Aid Society became a thing of the past. A new ladies' organization was formed

and given a name suitable to the three merging groups, the Women's Society for Christian Service. Completion of this union took place in the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies as well as the Ladies Aid and was accomplished by 1940. The Methodist Youth Fellowship took the place of the Epworth League.

After the selling of the old parsonage in 1920, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Hayes sold their home on M-15 to the Methodist Church. It was needed only a short time since Rev. R. E. Simons resided in Davison during the seven years he served us. Also, Rev. Ben Slates resided in his own home on the east side of McCormick Lake during the seven years that he was the pastor.

In 1940, this parsonage was sold, and the present parsonage just north of the Otisville State Bank was purchased by the Official Board. Rev. Albert Johns was the first pastor to reside here. In October, 1945, the mortgage on the present parsonage was burned.

On November 10, 1946, the Builders Class had a Grand Home-Coming in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the church.

In May, 1954, a Baldwin electric organ was presented to the church. The Wesleyan Guild had circulated subscriptions among friends, relatives and former residents of Otisville to raise money to buy an organ to be presented to the church as a memorial to Madelyn Stimson Doane, who had given so many years of her talents of voice and piano playing. The energy of the last few months of her life were given over to directing the choir while accompanying the group on the piano. Her voice was wonderfully low and pure. The organ was presented with an appropriate dedication ceremony and the church was completely filled for the service.

SUNDAY SCHOOL—No Methodist Church fails to have a Sunday School. From the beginning this was true of the Otisville M. E. Church and the merged church. While services of both the church and Sunday School are usually held in the same building, their various officers and finances are entirely separate affairs. Of course the Sunday School and other offices are under the direction of the pastor.

The principal aim of the Sunday School is the building of good moral and spiritual character to aid in the building of a better world. In carrying out this aim the Sunday School recognizes its duty to World Service, and the 4th Sunday offering each month goes to World Service.

The Superintendent, Hunton Laing, informs me the Sunday School attendance averages about 85. (Furnished by Committee.)

Baptist Society

At the time Otisville was changing from a lumbering community to an agricultural one, a family from Milford came here to go into business in the building next to the west side of the brick drug store, now the Masonic Temple. This building was later wrecked, together with what had been the Post Office for a long time. The store with living quarters on the second floor was known as the Hunton Block. Ed Bloomer was the head of the family which lived on the second floor and ran a general store on the ground floor. Mr. Bloomer also opened a printing office in what later became the Post Office. This store was also wrecked when the State Road Department rerouted M-15 through Otisville by way of North Street.

The Bloomer family were strong Baptists and soon had a Baptist Society organized. The second floor of the Swayze Building was rented for their Church and Sunday School. There was no resident pastor, but Davison had a strong Baptist Society and a church. Their pastor also served the Otisville charge. A sizeable organization grew up.

They bought three lots (now occupied by the L. F. Bird home) on which to build a church. But, before it could be built, the Bloomer family moved to Sparta, Michigan, with their entire business. This ended the society here.

The writer has a very vivid memory of a baptismal service performed in the winter time. A hole about four feet square had been cut in the ice and a platform built. This was attached to the dock on the west side of Dock Lake. The platform was sunk, so the floor would be about three feet below the top of the water. Mother's hired girl, Jennie Decker, was one of those baptized that day. They were taken into the water and immersed. No one suffered any sickness from the immersion.

Free Methodist Church

In 1880 the Otisville Society was formed. Several attempts were made to organize a work here during the earlier history of our operation hereabouts; at different times regular appointments were maintained and several general gatherings had been held here, supported largely by the membership who lived outside, and who belonged to the adjacent societies. These were often seasons of great power and victory. A hall was fitted up and used for some time, which was located over a blacksmith shop owned by a Mr. Rumbold. Situated as it was did not prove to be the most desirable room in which to worship God, largely because of the business carried on below. This was especially so on weekdays when religious services were being held. The ring from the falling hammer on the anvil, the blowing of the bellows, and oft-times clouds of coal smoke issuing from the room below were exceedingly unpleasant. Yet God often visited the place with sin-destroying power and many souls were saved in the upper room above the blacksmith shop.

In the winter, or spring of 1887, Rev. Myron Devoist conducted a successful revival meeting in what was known as Swayze's Hall, located over a drug store. Large congregations packed the auditorium and we believe by this means considerable strength was given to the work. This was followed during the succeeding summer by a remarkable Camp Meeting, held in the Hunton Grove, just outside the village. It is worthy of note, that in preparing for the meeting the brethren were facing a rather serious problem to secure sufficient water to supply the camp.

It was in the month of August and the season was very dry; several attempts had been made to discover some spring in the low places which surround the ground since there were sufficient indications pointing toward the existence of a spring thereabouts. What was thought would bring success only ended in disappointment and failure and our efforts spent in that direction were all in vain. Finally, it was decided, to try the experiment of digging a well with all the uncertainties as to the depth we might be compelled to go to in order to secure a sufficient supply of this all-important commodity. The work of excavating began, by laying out a form in a circle five feet across. Gradually the excavating proceeded, when lo, at the depth of about nine feet, a vein of water was punctured, which necessitated haste on the part of the worker, to escape the force of the water. In about an hour from the time the vein was



OTISVILLE FREE METHODIST CHURCH
Built in 1890-'91, Remodeled about 1938



FREE METHODIST PARSONAGE

punctured, the entire reservoir was full and running over, flooding the country below. Upon hearing about this marvelous well people came from far and near to behold this phenomenal wonder. This well was so located as to bring about one-fourth of its dimensions in the public highway and the other three-fourths on the farms of three different parties. This instance, which seemed little less than miraculous, also seemed to be a foreshadowing of the rising tide of spiritual grandeur during the on-coming meeting.

This meeting from the very beginning started high, and continued rising until it closed. Sometimes the meetings continued all night with not the least interruption or cessation of interest. All the young people of Free Methodist parentage, with one lone exception, besides scores of others, both old and young, were converted. The very atmosphere seemed pregnant with the Spirit's influence, and oh, such prevailing prayer as accompanied these devotions.

Vast crowds assembled on the Sabbath day, and at other times, and were subdued under the mighty spell; conversation was carried on only when necessary and then in undertone. So powerful was God's presence manifested on the grounds, a solemn awe settled down everywhere. Crowds stood in silence all night until the small hours of morning, beholding the work of God's sin-destroying power. The Almighty was among His people in Pentecostal blessings and large numbers united with the church. Not long thereafter, the society was organized in the village.

In 1885, during the pastorate of Rev. D. C. Embury, a convenient parsonage was purchased, located in the very heart of the village, making a comfortable home for the pastor's family. In 1890 and '91 under the labors of Rev. B. F. Doolittle, a neat church edifice was erected which was an honor to the church. Several revivals have been held here, notable among them one conducted by Rev. Hiram Burse in 1904 and 1905, which lasted nearly all winter. This meeting gave a great inspiration to the pilgrims. In 1937 during the pastorate of Rev. H. Hazzard the church building was generally remodeled, and a full-size basement was added, providing comfortable, well-lighted Sunday School rooms. A new entrance and belfry was erected, giving the church a more attractive appearance.

In 1949, during the pastorate of Rev. George Roth, the old parsonage on State Street was exchanged for the present parsonage located next door south of the church, making a very convenient and comfortable set-up.

In 1955, during the pastorate of Rev. R. M. Wilcox, the old church pews were taken out and donated to a Mexican Mission in Lansing, Michigan, and new light oak pews were purchased, matching the pulpit and altar rail, making the present sanctuary an attractive and comfortable place of worship.

The circuit continues in a state of prosperity and the faithful members are still looking for greater things by way of advancement in the days to come.

—Compiled by Rev. R. M. Wilcox.

Catholic Church

Otisville, years ago, was cared for by Father Francis Clement Kelley, when he was pastor at Lapeer, Michigan. He subsequently established the Church Extension Society, an organization that aids the Home Missions, and later became Bishop of Oklahoma



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHOLIC CHURCH
(Built in 1949)

City and Tulsa. Bishop Kelley died in 1948, and the Extension Society gave five thousand dollars toward the building of the mission church in Otisville in his memory. The church is named St. Francis Xavier, after Bishop Kelley's patron saint.

Ever zealous for the welfare of the souls of his parishioners, Fr. Earl V. Sheridan, then pastor of St. John's in Davison, started to celebrate Sunday Masses at the Otisville Community Center in April of 1947.

In October, 1948, the Most Reverend Bishop named the

Mission in Otisville St. Margaret Mary. At the same time it was announced to the people that in the future their Sunday contributions were to be kept separate from St. John's Church in Davison and the building fund for a new church in Otisville was started.

The Rudolph Quaderer family donated two lots of their farm for the church. An additional lot was purchased, giving the Mission 180 feet of frontage and 120 feet of depth.

During 1949, the church of St. Francis Xavier of Otisville was erected. The first sod was dug on Easter Sunday, April 17. On July 17, Father Mayotte laid the cornerstone. On September 18, the first Mass was said in the church.

On December 4, the Most Reverend Bishop blessed the church. The church was designed by Mr. William Doyle, a registered architect from St. John's Parish, Davison. It will seat approximately 250 people and was erected for a little over \$20,000. At the time of its dedication only the front of the church was brick. The other exterior walls were painted cinder blocks.

The low cost of the building was due in large part to the fact that parishioners donated many thousands of hours of free labor during its construction. Most of the landscaping was done by volunteer help from the parish, as well as the interior decorations. The altar is made of black walnut, backed by red velvet draperies. Oil-fired radiant heat is used, and there is an open ceiling, exposing attractive wood trusses. The total effect, both inside and outside, is very pleasing and the residents of Otisville, non-members as well as members of the congregation, are quite proud of this attractive addition to the Otisville landscape.

By 1950, the debt was down to \$9,000 and this was completely paid off by the summer of 1952. In the summer of 1953, Fr. Donahoe completed the church by adding a bell tower and baptistry as indicated on the original sketch and completing the bricking of the exterior of the church.

In the summer of 1953, the Quaderer family donated an additional three lots giving the church an area of 240 feet deep by 180 feet frontage. Additional adjoining property is under option in the event future development calls for it.

The Otisville church still remains a Mission of Davison St. John's under the direction of pastor Fr. Edward G. Donahoe. Fr. Brendan K. Ledwidge, assistant pastor at Davison, normally celebrates the Sunday Mass at this mission.

(Furnished by Catherine C. Laing.)

Lodges

ODDFELLOWS

Eagle Lodge No. 320, I.O.O.F., Organized October 17, 1878

Eagle Lodge No. 320, I.O.O.F., was organized by E. H. Thompson, Grand Master of Michigan, in a hall over the Beemer Blacksmith Shop. The Charter Members numbered five. The Genesee County History published in 1879 by Everts & Abbott of Philadelphia names the first officers as follows:

Charles E. Kingsbury, Noble Grand.
William E. Clark, Vice Grand.
A. J. Kellogg, Secretary.
Allison W. Whipple, Treasurer.
N. T. Wilson, Inner Guard.
Samuel Wilson, Outer Guard.
D. W. Allen, Conductor.
John Bodine, Warden.

By the end of 1879, the membership had been increased to twenty-three. By 1882 Forest Township had decided to build a Town Hall and Eagle Lodge No. 320 voted to help build the second story to be used as its Lodge Hall. The Lodge grew in membership for a time, then declined and in 1937 it voted to close its doors and merge with the Columbiaville lodge.

In its high day Eagle Lodge was quite an organization with a strong membership. In those days the I.O.O.F. Lodges of Fostoria, Columbiaville and Otisville met together on the 13th day of April of each year, sometimes at Fostoria, sometimes at Columbiaville, or at Otisville. On those days the Forest Cornet Band was often hired to furnish music and lead the parade.

One year when the yearly celebration was held at Fostoria there came near to being a big fight. The morning exercises were over and, as usual, there were games. The band members had left their instruments in the hall over the hardware, and many of us boys were on the street watching some fellows run and jump. There was a young Fostoria man who was quite a jumper. He had out-jumped all in the crowd who would jump, when along came Bob Goudy. He had evidently been at the hotel bar. He told the crowd he would get one of the band boys

who could out-jump their man. He hunted up Andrew Harris, who had jumped twenty-one feet near the depot in Otisville. Andrew came up and made one jump well over the best mark that had been made. That was all right, but Bob did not let it stop there. He began to crow that his brother-in-law could lick anybody in Fostoria.

At this time Andrew was keeping company with Bob's sister Mary, but they were not married as yet. Bob's boasting soon spread all over Fostoria. This boasting took place in front of the hardware where there was a hitching post and horses had pawed quite a hole around it. There had been late rains with the result that there was a good puddle of water there. Finally two husky brothers by the name of Harris came up. They were not relatives of Andrew Harris. Bob was still spouting when one of the brothers stepped up and knocked him into the puddle of water. When Bob got up he hunted up Andrew. Andrew came all right and said "What is the matter?" One of the brothers said "That brother-in-law of yours says you can whip anything in Fostoria—just try it!"

By this time all the Eagle Lodge members were looking for a fight. Andrew was a member of the band. On one side of an imaginary line stood a lot of the male population of Fostoria—on the other side stood as many or more males from Otisville. Andrew stepped forward and said: "Now I did not come up here to fight, but you can't scare me nor do I want to have my friends get into trouble. So I am not starting a fight. It's all up to you." Andrew spoke in a mild and not boastful voice. That was the turning point. The crowd dispersed and all were much happier.

It is too bad, but it is true that funny things sometimes happen at funerals.

The funeral of Otto Betts, an I.O.O.F. member, was held at the Free Methodist Church. The family had wanted it to be held from the M. E. Church where a funeral of a relative had been held, but the furnace had gone bad so I went to the Free Methodist minister and asked permission to use their church. It was freely granted, so I asked the I.O.O.F. Order to leave their regalia in their buggies.

In those days singing was required for all funerals, and for this one I had asked Mrs. E. D. Lewis, her daughter, and Mrs. Charles Parker to sing with me. Mrs. Lewis was the leading soprano and so it was up to her to give the key. Our first hymn was "Rock of Ages." That went well. The second hymn was "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." That did not go so well, for Mrs. Lewis started with the right words but the wrong tune—for she started with the tune we had already sung. Daughter Beatrice stood near enough to me so her left arm touched my right. That left arm shook like an aspen leaf in a storm. Mrs. Parker, as well as Beatrice, saw what had happened and Mrs. Lewis was singing alone.

Some time, dear readers, try singing as did Mrs. Lewis. She did very well for a ways, then had to stop and start over again,

Beatrice and Mrs. Parker stood shaking. I stood quietly as stiff as the Statue of Liberty. Mrs. Lewis did what no other person in the world could have done—she sang solo and did a fine job. As for the minister, red-headed young Edwards, he was floored. He started to pray, could not think of words to say and so started with the Lord's Prayer. He went through the words, "give us this day our daily bread" and stopped.

NO. 401, F.&A.M.

Charter Granted January 27, 1892

Otisville Lodge No. 401, F.&A.M., held its first meeting and election of officers under a special dispensation on December 30, 1891. Its charter was granted January 27, 1892, signed by:

John I. Look, Grand Master.

Wm. P. Innes, Grand Secretary.

Charter members were:

Z. B. House, Worshipful Master.

C. D. Doane, Senior Warden.

David Hinkle, Junior Warden.

Wm. Fowler, Senior Deacon.

Nathaniel Hart, Junior Deacon.

J. B. Laing, Secretary.

M. F. Branch, Treasurer.

J. L. Dynes, Senior Steward.

Dell Husted, Junior Steward.

Robert Beemer, Tyler.

Joseph Roberson, Chaplain.

John Dodd, Marshal.

Other members were: George Gale, P. J. Wilson, Richard Dodd, Charles Rockwell, William Sherwood, totaling seventeen in all.

The first home of the Lodge was the second floor of the Rumbold Building, over the Wheelwright Shop. In 1897 they moved to the second floor of the Stringer and Osband Building on the southwest corner of the intersection of State Road and Main Street. Here the writer was made a Master Mason, and here my wife and I became charter members of O.E.S. No. 282.

This building burned in 1903 and the Lodge had to seek new quarters. They were glad to buy the E. S. Swayze Building, which has since been known as the Otisville Masonic Temple, and the home of Nourmahal Chapter, O. E. S., No. 282.

The Lodge's territory takes in both Columbiaville and Otter Lake. It has steadily grown in membership until at the present time, Dec. 1, 1956, the number of Master Masons stands at 159. There have been many improvements, mostly in the decorations and equipment. Nourmahal Chapter has furnished the greater part of the kitchen equipment and table service. In 1950 and 1951, much money was spent and some free labor granted for

new decorations, the installing of a new toilet room, new furniture, and so on.

There is also an up-to-date heating system. The picture carpet had become so frayed and worn it had to be discarded a little over a year ago, being replaced by a high-quality carpet purchased jointly by Otisville Lodge No. 401 and Nourmahal Chapter No. 282. The carpet fund had many individual donations from members of both the Lodge and Chapter. Many older members were saddened to see the old carpet go, for it was one of the few carpets in existence picturing all the symbols of of Masonry, the Holy Bible with square and compass resting on it, the letter G, three, five and seven steps, etc. It was beautiful when it was new and was laid on the Lodge Room floor by Brother O. E. Snyder in 1903.

In 1906, Brother Wm. H. Parker became a Master Mason. He did not stop advancing in Masonry until he took the last step and became a 33rd Degree Mason. On May 26, 1934, he was elected Grand Marshal, and in 1938, Worthy Grand Master. He later served for some time on the Finance Committee of the Masonic Home. On June 6, 1931, to honor him, one hundred and eight Knights Templar came to Otisville, put on a parade, went to the School Grounds and gave an hour drill showing many interesting movements—then marched back to the Temple for dinner. In the evening the visitors worked the Third Degree on five candidates: Max McCormick, Cassius Doane, Leslie Barden, Burton Bird and C. W. Phipps.

Three funerals have been held in the Temple.

The first was for Abel C. Smith. The church at that time had a cracked furnace, so Mr. Smith having a life membership card, was taken to the Temple for the service.

The second funeral was that of O. E. Snyder, who lived the last few years of his life in the Masonic Home, where he passed away.

The third was for Zorrie B. House, the Lodge's first Worshipful Master and for several years its secretary.

Rev. R. E. Simons, a Past Master, preached the three funeral services.

For Brother Snyder's funeral, a male quartet furnished two songs—or, rather, furnished one song and attempted another, but oh, the misery of the second. The quartet, consisting of Mr. McDonald, the High School principal, first tenor, his brother second tenor, P. L. Laing, first bass and L. F. Bird, second bass, had gone to the Lodge Room before the funeral to tune up. The first tenor was to give the key. He did and struck it right for the first hymn, but for the second he struck about five tones too low. The tenors held the grade, the first bass faked a part, but when the low bass had to strike his notes they were so low it just could not be done, and it was not done. The writer rode to the cemetery with the minister, who asked what in the world was the matter with that second hymn. The first was very good.

The very place where funny things should never happen is

often the very place where they sometimes do happen.

Present officers of the Lodge this date, December 6, 1956, are:

Carl Caler, Worshipful Master.
George Johnson, Senior Warden.
Ralph Wallace, Junior Warden.
Edgar Sutherby, Secretary.
Archie McAllister, Treasurer.
Melvin Sutherby, Senior Deacon.
Dale Johnson, Junior Deacon.
Henry Hemingway, Tyler.
Robert Crawford, Senior Steward.
Joseph Smith, Junior Steward.
Floyd Norton, Chaplain.
Vernon Rock, Marshal.

Building trustees are: Orville Mitchell, Cecil W. Phipps, Archie McAllister. The other stewards are: Leslie Dormire and Ray Jennings. Now, at the close of 1956, the membership numbers 159.

This brief history of Lodge No. 401, F. & A. M. was prepared by a committee appointed by the Lodge. The committee first appointed was L. F. Bird, C. W. Phipps and the writer. Before the report could be finished C. W. Phipps became ill and had to go to the Jackson Rest Home, Vassar. L. F. Bird passed away suddenly at his breakfast table before church one Sunday morning. Brothers Archie McAllister and Vernon Rock were appointed to replace them.

NOURMAHAL CHAPTER, NO. 282 ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR

After Otisville Lodge No. 401 had been established, there was a feeling among the Masons and their wives that there should also be an Eastern Star Chapter. After the preliminary arrangements were completed, the first meeting was held in the Masonic Lodge Room on January 30, 1900, conducted by the Worthy Grand Matron, Order of the Eastern Star of Michigan, Sister Helen Balmer, and the Grand Marshal. Sixteen signed the roll of membership at this meeting, and the Worthy Grand Matron appointed the following officers:

Worthy Matron: Milie Laing.
Worthy Patron: John Dynes.
Conductress: Anna Clapp.
Associate Conductress: Agnes Roberts.
Adah: Emma Burroughs.
Ruth: Etta House.
Esther: Grace Goudy.
Martha: Anna Osband
Electa: Etta Zacharias.
Warder: Jane Mileham.
Sentinel: William Goudy.

The first regular meeting was held February 16, 1900. At this meeting ten were initiated and Belle McCormick was appointed Secretary and Ellen McCormick Associate Matron. This completed the first corps of officers who guided the Chapter until Oct. 12, 1900.

The Name chosen was Nourmahal, meaning "The Light of the Harem." Nourmahal was a beautiful lady in the harem of the Caliph Haroun Al Raschid. The story of her love for Selin and how she regained his lost affections by means of a love spell is told in Thomas Moore's "Lalla Rookh," from which the name was taken.

By October the chapter, having met all the requirements, was issued a charter and number 282 by the Grand Chapter. The following were the charter members:

John L. Dynes	Flora Dodds
Grace Dynes	Jane Mileham
Jennie Dynes	Mrs. Roy Davis
J. B. Laing	Paul Laing
Milie Laing	Nellie Laing
C. J. Burroughs	E. J. Osband
Emma Burroughs	Anna Osband
Chester Zacharias	Nathaniel Hart
Etta Zacharias	Charlotte Hart
Etta House	William Goudy
J. H. McCormick	Grace Goudy
Ellen McCormick	Carrie Fowler
Belle McCormick	William Sherwood
Agnes Roberts	Melissa Sherwood
Anna Clapp	Mrs. Delia Palmer
John Dodds	

In March, 1903, the chapter moved to the present building along with the Masons and has down through the years worked along with the Masonic Lodge. With few exceptions there has always been a feeling of good will and cooperation between the lodge and the chapter and we are very proud of this fact.

In November of 1907 the Chapter voted to join the Genesee County Association, of which we are still a member. Since joining, several have served as officers, three of whom have been president.

The Chapter has been honored twice with appointments to Grand Chapter: In 1912, Mildred Dynes as Grand Esther and in 1923, Ethel Parker to the same office. Special mention for service goes to Mabel McInally who served as faithful Secretary for 27 years.

The Past Matrons' Club is very active and has helped the Chapter with many of its projects and given many useful gifts.

It is impossible to list the accomplishments of the Chapter down through the years, but there have been, of course, many money-making projects. There have been many social events that became pleasant memories for our members. The people we meet and the friendships we receive make our beloved order

what it is and brings to all of us enjoyment and good fellowship.

Each year as new officers take over, they have new ideals and projects. As 1957 officers are about to take over, it is their project to organize a Bethel of Job's Daughters. We feel the need in this community for something for our teen-age girls.

The present membership is 151, with 14 Life Members.

There are three charter members living. Two are still members of the chapter. They are Paul L. Laing and Flora Dodds Robertoy.

The Officers on December 31, 1956, are:

Worthy Matron: Evelyn Wearne.

Worthy Patron: Carl Caler.

Associate Matron: Dorothy Brown.

Associate Patron: Vernon Rock.

Secretary: Ruth Davis.

Treasurer: Ilda Sutherby.

Conductress: Doris Wallace.

Associate Conductress: Genevieve Hatch.

Chaplain: Mildred Caler.

Marshal: Janice Lyon.

Organist: Irene Frost.

Adah: Donna Johnston.

Ruth: Alta Mitchell.

Esther: Audrey Forsyth.

Martha: Othealia Smith.

Electa: Eva Burch.

Warder: Susan Rock.

Sentinel: Edgar Sutherby.

(Furnished by Ruth Davis, Secretary.)

ANCIENT ORDER OF GLEANERS

In 1894, a Mr. Grant Slocum of Caro, Michigan, organized the first lodge of Ancient Order of Gleaners. In 1897, Lorenzo G. Herrington pushed to organization the East Forest Arbor with lodge rooms over the wheelwright part of the Rumbold Blacksmith Shop. Also the West Forest Arbor held its first meeting in the Herrington home, but soon had a home of its own in Rogersville.

For several years the organization continued to grow and the insurance part never failed. There is still one member of the East Forest Arbor living in Otisville, Mrs. Sarah Crawford, who was ninety-two years of age on March 22, 1957.

EZRA-PAUL POST NO. 321
AMERICAN LEGION

In September of 1919, some of the boys who had served in the United States Army or Navy during the period from June 6, 1916, to November 11, 1918, felt that they should organize a "War Veterans" organization. They wished this organization to be able to accommodate the boys who went from this area into the service, even though that service did not take them overseas or out of the United States.

Since the "V.F.W." (Veterans of Foreign Wars) limited its membership to those who served on foreign soil, most of the service men here were not eligible for the V. F. W. Since the American Legion was organized with that very thought in mind—namely, to take in those who served at home as well as those who served abroad—we organized our first American Legion Post in Otisville under the temporary charter of the National Organization. After the National Organization was granted its charter, the Department of Michigan was granted a charter. Then, our Ezra-Paul Post was granted its first charter and assigned the number 321 and the name we had selected, "Ezra-Paul." We had fifteen members as charter members.

The first Commander and the following officers were elected and installed:

Commander: Lloyd A. Forsyth.
First Vice-Commander: A. B. Crawford.
Adjutant: Charles L. Forsyth.
Treasurer: L. K. Henderson.
Sergeant-at-Arms: Donald Alexander.
Historian: Loyal Scothan.

This post was able to grow and be active until 1923, when many of the boys had moved away or gone into work that would not permit them to be active in the post; so we had to surrender our charter to the State Department that year. We did not become active again until 1932, when we reorganized and were granted a second charter, but with the same name and number as before—which made us very happy. We have maintained this post continuously ever since.

During World War II, there was quite a struggle to maintain our membership, but because we of World War I wanted the boys returning from this last great struggle to have something more to come home to than we had—we made a special effort to keep this Post up and alive; and also to keep our Legion Home which we owned.

When the boys of World War II got back we induced them to take up membership in this Post No. 321, and there is now an average membership each year in Ezra-Paul Post of about 65. Most of them are quite active and are continuing the activities of

the American Legion in this community in civic welfare, youth education and recreation—as has been the tradition of this Post for many years.

The name of the Post was selected by its founders, after considerable study, from the first names of the only two boys from Otisville who were killed in action on the battlefields of France. Ezra Smith was a private first class in the 5th Marine Regiment of the famed 2nd Division. He was killed at Belleau Wood, Chateau Thierry, on June 6, 1917. His body was brought back and is now buried in Smith Hill Cemetery, Otisville, with Government Marker. Paul VanVorhees was a private first class in Company F, 125th Infantry of the famed 32nd Division. He was killed at Montfaucon in the Meuse Argonne drive in September of 1917, during a vicious campaign to drive the Germans out of the northwest part of France. He was carrying ammunition in boxes along a wooded section toward the front line—together with about 25 other men, when they were spotted by German Observation Balloonists as they were about 100 rods from the front line. They were blasted by artillery fire and all were killed. His body, too, has been returned from France and is buried in Bay City, Michigan.

Ezra-Paul Post of the American Legion is proud to be the oldest civic organization in Otisville to serve its community continuously and creditably for so many years.

The charter members of Ezra-Paul Post No. 321 were:

*Donald Alexander.

*Smith Burt.

A. B. Crawford.

*Dan Eckler.

C. L. Forsyth.

*Lloyd A. Forsyth.

Archie Campbell.

*Harold Jewell.

Orvill Kenney.

Alvin C. Smith.

Marshall Smith.

Loyal Scothan.

*Robert Russell.

Frank Traver.

Paul Wright.

*Deceased.

(This history was compiled by Charles L. Forsyth.)

Fires

There is no one now living to tell us about the early fires in Otisville. The Genesee County History I have gives the date the Hayes Mill burned, and when it was rebuilt. We do know that fires were fought by what were called bucket brigades. They worked hard enough, but quenched few, if any fires. However, they may have been instrumental in keeping fires from spreading.

The first of what we then called a big fire was the burning of the Lake House in 1879 or 1880.

FIRE DEPARTMENTS

On Page 436 of my copy of the old Genesee County History, I find the following, and I quote the exact words: "A volunteer Fire department was organized November 6, 1878, with the following members: F. W. Nicholson, J. Ostrander, A. M. Smith, Eugene Alexander, John E. Smith, E. R. Freeman, M. L. Eckler, M. A. Bentley, William Gott. The trustees of the village then placed the management of this department in the hands of a Chief Engineer and appointed Charles Moon to fill that position." End of quote.

The village trustees had already bought a small hand engine and arranged for the building of fire cisterns. One of these cisterns was placed on the south side of Main Street where the State Road turned easterly, and actually protruded into the street. Around the cistern was a heavy frame fence. I can't forget that fence, for one very dark night, before Otisville had a bank and while Mamma and I with baby Douglas were occupying two rooms in Father McCormick's home, I was going home with a shot bag loaded with silver. As I came to the cistern fence my left cheek struck what I thought was a man's hand. I started to swing with my heavy bag of silver when a horse snorted. It had been tied on the north side of the street and had gotten lose. The buggy was caught in the cistern fence and my cheek had hit the horse's nose.

In 1884, a fire started in the Parker, Adams Hardware Store. It started in the early morning hours, and before the fire could be stopped four business places were in ashes. The Hardware, with living quarters on the second floor, the Elwell Harness Shop, the Wellman Furniture Store, also with living quarters on the second floor, and the Beemer Blacksmith Shop, with the Eagle Lodge, I.O.O.F. room on the second floor were destroyed. As I remember, I see Andrew Harris and a fellow by the name of Jobson each with their arms wrapped around a Round Oak heating stove going into the street. Others were doing the seemingly impossible to save household goods and merchandise. I saw little of the rest of the fire—for a southeast wind was blowing pieces of shingles, still afire, which were landing on the roof of

our home. Andrew Harris climbed to the roof, Father pumped water from our cistern and handed it up to Harris who ran about the roof dousing the burning shingles and sparks with water, while I was squirting water from a hand engine onto the south and east sides of the house. Our house was saved although the two sides were badly scorched and required repainting.

I had no way of dating the year of this fire, until I happened to think of a feat performed during the fire by a small daughter of our Methodist Episcopal Minister (1883-1885). Her name was Carrie Austin. She was helping to carry furniture from the Wellman Store. After the fire was out, this small lass was lauded for carrying a large couch out of the burning building. The brick building housing living quarters and a meat market, standing just west of the Beemer shop, was saved.

Two years after this fire the Branch Hotel burned, only to be replaced by the brick hotel which stands today on the ground where the frame hotel burned. Near the top of the front of this hotel, for everybody to see, are the figures "1886."

The second big fire happened in April, 1903, at night. It started in the Stringer and Osband brick store near midnight. The brick store was attached to the old Freeman Building, where Stringer and Osband had commenced their business. Of course this building, the harness shop, the Lansfield store with the G.A.R. hall on the second floor, and the barber shop with living quarters above, all went up in flames that night. The Stringer and Osband firm was immediately dissolved. Stringer moved to Detroit and Osband had moved to Flint. The lots where the Stringer and Osband store stood were purchased by Patrick and Mary Lansfield. The Elevator business was sold to the J. P. Burroughs Company of Flint and there were new owners for the homes.

The Stringers, especially, were a real loss to Otisville. Mr. Stringer, before the Otisville State Bank was built, was really the banker for the village. He was very active in helping to organize and maintain athletics, musical and other organizations, lecture courses, celebrations, etc. He was for years a trustee in the M.E. Church. Mrs. Stringer was a beautiful woman both in appearance and character. She was very active in the Church and Sunday School and in the Ladies' Aid.

While Stringer was in business here and doing some banking business, he used me as a kind of agent while I was attending Flint Central High School in 1888-1892. I believe he did his banking at the Genesee County Savings Bank, at Kearsley and Saginaw streets, just across Kearsley from its present location. I would be contacted and asked to stop on Friday afternoon at the Flint Bank and get a package of from one to two thousand dollars for delivery to Mr. Stringer. I would not like to carry such a package today, even on the old Huckleberry if it were running now. (The "Old Huckleberry" was a train for the branch starting about four miles out of Flint. It combined freight, passenger, baggage and mail service).

The Otisville State Bank was chartered in 1907. Up to that time more than half the bills paid by the Otisville business places

were paid by cash, so if you were doing much business, it meant you had to keep plenty of money on hand most of the time. You had to be very careful to have the traveling men sign the bills as paid. Even then it was a dangerous way to do business.

Leaving banking business, we will get back to fires. In about 1899, the elevator business was owned and operated by a Mr. Wilson. One evening the building burned. Stringer and Osband had built a large cold storage building in which they stored crated eggs, but before they were sold the ice played out. Two-thirds of the eggs were still in storage and a complete loss. The result was that it was used for a time as a bean storage.

After Wilson's fire, Stringer and Osband moved the cold storage building to the place where the elevator had stood. The cold storage building was especially adapted to be made over into an elevator, because ice was heavy and a structure strong enough to hold ice could hold grain.

After the J. P. Burroughs Company took over the elevator business they added lumber and other building supplies to the business, making it a great help to Otisville. In 1943 Lloyd Warner, who had lately been operating the elevator for the J. P. Burroughs Company, purchased the business with John Parker as a partner. The business has continued until the present time as a real going concern. In fact, the stock and the housing for the stock has doubled in the past twelve years.

In about 1908 McCormick and Laing had a light fire caused by the explosion of a gas lamp. The damage was only one hundred and twenty-one dollars, but the fact that Joe Pear, Albert Swift and Frank Ormsby, with their two and three-gallon extinguishers put out the fire, brought to the attention of the Village Council that a larger extinguisher would be fine for inside fires, so, when an agent for extinguishers made by an Ohio Company came along, he took it upon himself to see the six village trustees and get their consent to buy the product he was selling for \$1,800.

I happened to be President of the village at that time, so the agent came to me and asked me to call the council together that evening. I looked at the picture he showed me and asked the price. He said \$1,800.

That seemed to me to be too much for the size of the extinguisher, so I asked permission to call the Flint No. 1 Fire Station. He said, "See here," and showed me a letter signed by the State Fire Commissioner, stating that this company was the only company that made that kind of equipment, but I took the telephone and called for the Flint Fire Station. The Fire Chief answered. I asked him from what company they bought the greater part of their equipment. He told me they dealt with the American LaFrance Co., and gave me their Detroit telephone number. I called there, stated my problem, and they said they could have an agent at the Wednesday evening meeting. After thanking them for the informatoin I turned to the Ohio agent and said: "I will call a meeting for Wednesday evening. Meet with us then. On Wednesday evening the American LaFrance

agent was on hand, but the other agent did not show up. We bought the same equipment for \$1,350, saving \$450 on the deal.

A fire broke out on the second floor of the Crawford and Laing General Store on January 4, 1920. Owners were W. W. Crawford and R. J. Laing. The fire was undoubtedly started by mice, for near a pile of baled paper was found a box of matches and it was evident that mice had gnawed into one small box. There was much smoke, but little blaze. The stream of water put on the fire did not stop its burning slowly, and Fire Chief Peter Hart finally stopped the water. The smoke was still dense. Albert Misner, although too old then to be a member of the Fire Department, became the hero of the day by going upstairs and crawling close to the floor up to the pile of bales. He jerked out the smoldering bales and threw them out of a window onto the street. The floor under the burning papers and the ceiling of the first floor were burned through, but the greatest loss was by water and smoke.

In 1936, the Village Council determined to buy the first real fire engine it had ever owned. The Council at the time consisted of Robert Wade, President; Elmer Craig, Clerk; Lloyd Warner, Trustee; Christian Metz, Trustee; Paul L. Laing, Trustee; Edgar Osborn, Trustee; Alvin Smith and Fred Luskey, Trustees.

A committee was appointed by President Wade to go to Detroit to look over a fire engine like the one agent Gray, representative of the General Fire Truck Company, had been trying to sell the village.

The committee, consisting of the first three trustees mentioned above, went to Detroit together with Fire Chief L. K. Henderson. We met the agent, Mr. Gray, who had invited us to make the trip, and with him we went to Inkster, the village that had just purchased a fire truck like the one Mr. Gray wanted to sell us. It appeared to be very satisfactory and was so reported to our council. A fire engine was, therefore, purchased from the General Fire Truck Company to be placed on a Dodge chassis bought from local dealers, Parker and Henderson.

In 1950, Lawrence Henderson ended twenty-six years of service as Fire Chief. Delmar Griswold has since held the position.

You have previously read of the organization and dissolution of the Otisville Creamery Company. I have done my best to obtain the date on which this fine building burned. It occurred in 1913 or 1914. I believe it must have burned while I was in Harper Hospital, Detroit, for I have no recollection of the event. I have also been unable as yet to find anyone who can remember the exact date.

For many years, Forest Township paid the Village for out-of-the-village fire protection, but the question of water was a serious problem since the Otisville fire engine carried only two hundred and fifty gallons of water. By the time the fire company could reach the out-of-town fires the fire would be too far along for that amount of water to do much good. Most of the farmers' cisterns held no great amount of water.

Shortly after Fire Chief Henderson resigned, I was in his garage and we were talking about the fires. He told me about a thousand-gallon fire tanker engine he had seen. I was so impressed that I could hardly wait for the next Township Board meeting. In the meantime, I got in touch with a salesman who immediately came to Otisville. We met in Supervisor Doane's gas station. I contacted Mr. Griswold, the new fire chief, and he met with us. We were very much impressed with the pictured engine he showed us. The result was the purchase of a tanker to be mounted on a Ford truck. The next move was for the Board to contract with the Village for a combined fire company.

The largest single building fire in the Village started January 8, 1951, at about 11:30 P. M. in the Otisville Community Center Building. The hall floor was built partly for a high school basketball court and there were a couple of rooms used by the High School Economics teachers for classes. Also, part of the building was used by the music teachers for the various music groups and band, etc. Actually, it was really a part of the Otisville High School, because of the lack of facilities during the previous war years when use of materials and building was restricted.

It was very fortunate that a good water system had been installed a year and ten days before this fire. The Otisville, Forest Township and Davison engines were able to hold the fire between the walls of the burning building while keeping water on the Kenneth Russell home which stood almost against the west wall of the building. The Otter Lake Fire Department stood by to be on hand if any other buildings should catch fire. There was a strong west wind, so that if the house east of the burning building had caught fire, the company standing by would have been needed. It will never be known how the fire started, but it is thought by many that it was caused from faulty wiring. It was a very spectacular fire, because of the fact that a very beautiful, shiny ceiling had, a short time before, been built-in of beautiful material that was really inflammable, so the interior was a mass of flame before it was noticed from the outside.

Large fires are terrible, but they make way for still better buildings. So it was with this one. Before the fire was out one of the officers of the corporation, who stood by me looking at the dying flames, said, "It is now up to us to begin all over again."

Now, in 1956 many in the Township managed to get rid of dry grass and rubbish by setting it afire and calling the fire department before the fire could get out of control, thinking or knowing that it is an easy way to clean up. There is a local law to make them pay the fire department for the trip, but it is not enforced. Not everyone who calls the fire department is guilty of negligence, but when it goes so far as to have two and three calls a day come in to put out this type of fire, something is wrong! If State Law were enforced some fires would be avoided.

Smith Hill Cemetery

The first part of Smith Hill Cemetery was a piece of land ninety feet wide taken out of the old Teachout property. It ran as far west as what is now the 1939 Addition. It was Block A. As this block began to fill up, more land was purchased on the south side and mapped as Blocks B and C. Then Block D and the east part of Block E were added.

So far there was no opening from the west, and funerals from the Village had to move south on the State Road to the Dodge Road, then east to the Cemetery Road, then north to the Cemetery.

As Blocks D and E began to fill, the Township found it necessary to buy more land. Land to the west leading out to the State Road was purchased, giving an outlet to the State Road.

Blocks F, G and H were added.

It must be that the early maps were lost, for County Surveyor Moses Middleton, was called upon to re-map Blocks A, B, C, D, E and F. Then came blocks G and H.

Up to 1925, anyone outside the Township could purchase a lot for ten dollars. Anyone in the Township who wished to buy a lot or lots before they needed them could buy them at the same price.

The Parker brothers, Charles, Will and John, bought six of them in a block. Ronald J. Laing, together with myself, Frank Ormsby and Margaret Welch all took two lots each—making another block of eight lots.

By 1924, the Township Board saw the necessity of making another block of lots, so the balance of the then-owned land was mapped and named the 1925 Addition.

Now came the 1925 election of officers.

In March, I was met on the street by Reed Henderson, who knew I was much interested in the Cemetery. He asked me if I would run for Township Clerk. I first said "No." Reed said the cemetery needed a clerk interested in it. With a little more talk I finally agreed to have my name placed before the Caucus. I did not attend the Caucus, but I was nominated and elected.

The readers of this history will find the next few pages

quite personal, but it is the only way I can bring to you anywhere near a complete history of the cemetery.

From 1925 through thirty years I was the custodian of the Cemetery. The first thing to explain is that the Cemetery is the property of the whole Township, and Otisville is a part of the Township. The second thing is that there were no cemetery records kept up to 1925. When lots were sold no certificates of title were given to the purchasers or donees. (Any person living in the township at the time of death was entitled to a lot at no charge if the family had not already taken one. There were no half-lots, or single lots. The reader can see what I was up against.

As for blocks A, B, C, D and E, up to the time of the Middleton mapping I could find no maps. On the lots of the blocks just mentioned, about one-half of them had markers on them. Burials had been made on the unmarked lots. How many of them no one could tell. I tried to use three of them, but the sexton, Amasa Brown, came upon bodies, so all those unmarked and unrecorded lots had to be considered occupied.

As for Blocks F, G and H, the purchaser's or donee's only evidence of ownership was his name written on the map. Nearly all burials in these blocks are marked by granite or marble markers with proper inscriptions on them.

Before starting to use the 1925 addition, the first thing to do was to find a copy of some certificate of title, complying with State laws, from some cemetery—which I did. The next move was to get a book of titles printed and so perforated that the Township Clerk could easily remove them and give them to the purchasers or donees. The Clerk was to keep for the Township an indexed book of copies of the certificates as given out. The next move was to get surveyor Smith to stake out the lots. This was done from Block H as far west as the ravine.

Before the surveyor was called there was a large cat hole that had to be drained and filled. Luckily there was a large mound on the east side of the ravine which was used for the fill.

For years—probably from the first—it was the custom to elect the sexton at the Annual Township Meeting, and it never changed until ill health caused Arthur Betts to resign.

Soon after 1925, State laws and County regulations began changing our entire tax structure, and the Township Board had to follow suit. The Annual Township Meeting voted a yearly Cemetery tax, starting at \$300, then \$500, \$900 and finally \$1,200. The next step was to vote a one-mill tax for the cemetery. The County School Superintendent, the City Agent and myself acting for the Township in behalf of our Cemetery had to appear before the County Allocation Board to plead their cases, all trying to get that one mill from the County tax.

Forest Township got it! Supervisor Doane's long membership on the Board of Supervisors and his political pull must have helped. The final one-mill levy had rather an easy sailing.

Before C. D. Doane's death he had asked the writer how we could levy a special two-mill tax for road purposes. I spent days

with my nose in Compiled Laws and Public Acts. I reported to Doane, so he and Treasurer Payne selected one name in each of the thirty-six township sections, asking them to be present, bringing others, to a township meeting.

That was the initial movement.

This is no place to detail all that was done, but the two-mill tax was spread by Supervisor H. P. Williams, who fought in the County Board of Supervisors before much opposition.

The second one-mill tax for Forest Township would probably have been lost had not Williams very forcibly told them—"We have complied with the State laws and no matter what your action may be the tax will be spread by me." It was spread, but that was not the end of the matter.

In November the writer was called to the telephone by the State Auditor General. He asked me to explain our moves regarding the two-mill tax over the 15-mill limitation—which I did. He asked me to write my explanations and mail them to him.

We did better than that. Mr. Williams was attending the State Supervisors Association meeting the following week and took all our records pertaining to the question into the Auditor's office. That ended the battle. When I appeared before the County Allocation Board to ask for our second one-mill for the cemetery purposes, I told my mission and Secretary Boyd pleaded our case with few words. In less than five minutes the request was granted.

The reader may ask why the preceding tax moves were given under the heading "Cemetery" and in an Otisville history.

Well, remember the two one-mill levies and the two-mill special tax all went into the Township general fund up to 1955. From 1933 to 1955, it was only necessary for the Township to carry three funds—general fund, cemetery fund and school fund. It is the duty of the Board, by State law, to see that the custodian does his work. The Custodian's duty is really to be caretaker and see that the rules and regulations of the Township Board are carried out.

Now, the Township is run on its share of the sales tax. The Village as a unit, gets one-third, practically, of what comes into the Township. That part of the township outside the Village gets two-thirds. The entire township expense, including cemetery expense, less sale of lots and assessments is paid from the two-thirds..

By 1925 the price of lots had risen to \$15. By 1935 the price had risen to \$50, by 1936 to \$60, by 1942 to \$75, by 1947 to \$90, by 1948 to \$150, by 1953 to \$260 for full-sized lots sold to non-residents. The prices to residents living here less than five years is \$160; more than five but less than ten years is \$140; more than 10 but less than 15 is \$120; 15 to 20 is \$100, and over 20 years is \$80. Half-lots are sold at about the same ratio.

By 1935, the Township Board could see that we had to buy new land because the State of Michigan had cut off a large part

of the 1925 addition lying west of the ravine. The Board also saw that the cemetery rules and regulations had to be changed for the life of the cemetery. The 1936 addition was bought, surveyed, mapped, and staked, mostly with iron stakes. The staking was not finished, because the place of supply ran out of material. Before selling any lots in this addition, the Township Board motored to Flint Park Cemetery and came home and voted to follow a similar plan.

In 1939, Roy Teachout put a very fair price on the land that would extend the north line of Block A west to the State Road. The Board easily saw it would much improve the cemetery and bought it. As for planning the mapping of this addition, as was also the mapping of the 1936 and the Laing Memorial Additions, it was left entirely up to the surveyor to follow the suggestions of the clerk.

If I could have seen ahead fifty years, the 1936 map would have been the same, but the 1939 map would be somewhat changed. As to the line of half-lots on the north side and the line on the south side—there would have been many more half-lots.

In 1946, Albert Holmes came to me wanting to sell me the north half of what became the Laing Memorial Addition. I told him I was not interested unless the offer would include all the land lying north of a line beginning at the most southerly stake of the 1936 Addition and running east to the Cemetery Road. Early the next morning his father came, and in a few minutes I had purchased what I wanted. In March it was deeded to Paul L. Laing and Nellie M. Laing. On April 29, I was left alone with a lovely piece of ground with a gentle slope to the south. It had not been purchased as an investment, but to save it from slipping away and being lost to the Township as an addition to its cemetery.

The Township had voted at the April election to buy it at the same price Mrs. Laing and I had paid for it. A small marker in the center of the Addition tells the rest of the story. The Township Board would have voted for a more pretentious marker, but I said "no." Our son, Hunton, engineered the base and with my help, built it four feet square and five feet in depth, so if untouched it will be there for centuries.

In mapping this Addition the donor had present conditions in mind, realizing that time changes needs.

The Cemetery needed individual lots and more half-lots. Eighteen feet of the north side of the Addition was divided half and half. The west half was mapped into individual lots, the east half into half-lots. The west half was named Block A, the east half Block B. Block F was also divided into half-lots. A three-foot passageway was mapped for two reasons, first, to allow the placing of water lines as needed, and second, to allow for using extra-long vaults.

When this Addition was given to the Township it was thought it might fill the cemetery needs for one hundred years, but things change fast sometimes. We plan for the present, never

knowing what the future needs may be. Possibly the south half of this Addition may need remapping before many years have passed.

In writing the history of Smith Hill Cemetery, it would be unfair not to mention Arthur Betts. For many years there was no name presented before the annual meeting for cemetery sexton but the name of Arthur Betts, and it is very doubtful if the cemetery will ever have another sexton as dutiful to his task as Arthur. He was so proud of his work that he almost lived in the cemetery. He knew every inch of it, and was always on hand to assist seekers.

Ill health struck him during his last two years as sexton, and he could do little of the mowing, but he hated to quit. Finally, soon after his last term started, the writer happened to be at the cemetery. He called me into the tool house and told me he could go no farther. I told him the Township Board would find someone to take his place, but asked him to stay on the job one month, not to work but to aid his successor in learning the cemetery. When the Township Board was advised of Betts' resignation, Mr. Williams said it might be possible to get Archie McAllister to fill the post. Fortunately Mr. McAllister agreed to take it.

Soon after he took over he and I spent a day visiting cemeteries, sextons and cemetery superintendents to learn as much as possible of how other cemeteries were managed and cared for.

Now a few of the accomplishments for the Cemetery carried out by Archie McAllister should be mentioned.

He helped in the purchase of trees, shrubs and evergreens, and in the placing of these. The purchases were all made at wholesale prices. He aided in the distribution of printed circulars and booklets covering rules and regulations—but most of all, he cleared the cemetery of nearly all the unsightly and costly curbs. This made a big saving in the cost of upkeep. (Archie, that was a hard, laborious job, and you did it with no help except the little I could give you!)

From all that can be learned, William Stover was the first man to open graves in Smith Hill Cemetery. The second was the father of Oscar Raisin, our blind friend with the good bass voice. It would hardly be true to call these two men sextons. They were the handy men who could be hired to open graves.

Things are very different now. The cemetery sexton is responsible to the Township and his position is a very important one. From April 1 to November 1, it really is an all-time job. From November 1 to April 1 it is an on-call job. The hiring of extra needed help is his business, under the direction of the custodian who in turn is responsible to the Township Board.

And even the Township Board has its responsibilities. It must conform to the laws of the State and the votes of the electorate.

The foregoing was read to the Township Board and accepted as correct.

Schools (District Five)

When Dr. Rogers mapped his plat of the Village in 1866, he reserved a plot of ground 200 feet by 200 feet on the west side of North Street and the north side of Pine Street for school purposes.

Somewhere near the south line of the Village, and on the west side of the State Road, the first schoolhouse in Forest Township was built. The year it was built is questionable (see Lumbering Section). The question has been asked me many times, "Was the first schoolhouse a log or a frame schoolhouse?" I could not answer definitely. All I could say was that if it was built before 1851 it must have been a log one. If it was built after 1851, it must have been a frame one. The reason is that in 1851 the first sawmill in Forest, according to the Genesee County History, published in 1879, was the Hayes Mill, built in 1851. That mill stood about a stone's throw from the location of the first schoolhouse, so the lumber was very handy.

I see another reason for my thinking it was built of lumber. I can well remember hearing it said, "the Hunton Mill schoolhouse was moved from the Village in order that it might be a secondary part of the District No. 5 School. It would have been an easy job to move it in those days. Two good teams of horses with a crew of those stalwart lumbermen could move it to Hunton Mill in short order.

There are two things to tell about that school that will please a few readers at least. The first one is that Fred Smith, son of Abel C. Smith, was one of the teachers in the Hunton Mill School. After his death his license to teach, which he carried up to the time of his death, was turned over to me. It was signed by W. H. Begel. In those days there were two Township officers elected each year—a Township School Superintendent and a Township School Inspector. W. H. Begel was the Superintendent who examined Fred and gave the license. The examinations were oral and short. I listened to Father give one when he was Township Superintendent.

The second one is that a few years ago I read an article published in one of the earliest newspapers printed in Otisville. It gave a Hunton Mills teacher's report of the two perfect attendances for the month—Ida Freeman and Stewart (Dude)

Herrington. Stewart and the writer have had many, many pleasant visits on the streets of Otisville. He is not more than two years older than I and can relate many events of interest to me. Most of them concern Hunton's Mill.

I have a picture of the mill showing Stewart's father on the top, together with barrels of water and pails. His job was to watch for sparks that might light on the roof, and to douse them with water. When Stewart learned I had the picture he saw to it that I brought it out for old-timers to see at all the Otisville Home-Comings.

In 1867, a fine schoolhouse, for that day, was built on the reserved lot (see Lumbering Section). After the brick school was built in 1920, the three-room school was wrecked by W. H. Parker and a large part of the lumber furnished material for the three homes he built on the old school site (see Agricultural section.)

At the start, two teachers were used—occupying but two of the three rooms, the primary room and the High School room. The teacher of the lower grades was called the primary teacher. The teacher of the higher grades was the principal. The two-room school did not suffice very long before a third teacher was hired and an intermediate department occupied the third room.

William Begel, who had taught for some time in the one-room school, became the principal in the new school. He must have been Principal for at least two years—possibly three. He was a much-liked teacher, both by the pupils and the community. After he finished teaching he was a member of the school board for many years.

After adding the intermediate department the school had ten grades. In 1884, under the leadership of Lee E. Joslyn, the first graduating class stepped out of the school in proud possession of diplomas. I name the members: Ida Ranney, Mattie Burnell, Agnes I. Ormsby, Frankie Rockwell, John Judson, Leon Begel and Nelson Dodge.

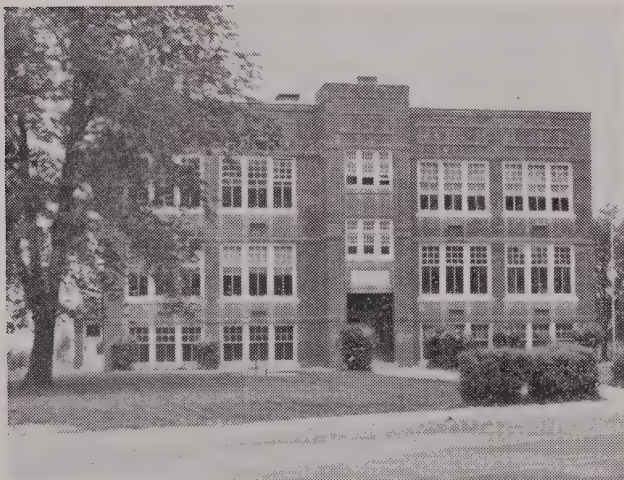
The writer cannot leave the name of Joslyn without telling one of his experiences as a wrestler. Andrew Harris, one of the larger boys in the high school at that time, and Joslyn were wrestling at recess time. Men's and boys' trousers, at that time, were very tight. Suddenly there was a rip in the seat of Joslyn's pants. Luckily, he boarded not far from the school grounds. The larger boys gathered around him and led him to his boarding house. The recess bell to end recess time rang a little late that day.

While the 1884 class was the first one to graduate from Otisville High, it was also the largest one to graduate for fourteen years. In 1898, while the writer was Principal, there were ten graduates, four boys and six girls. Of the boys, Carlos (Carl) Long went to Flint Central to complete his twelve grades. After that he attended Michigan University where he majored in Chemistry. He graduated with honors, so that he stepped right into a lucrative and important position. Charles Misner finished

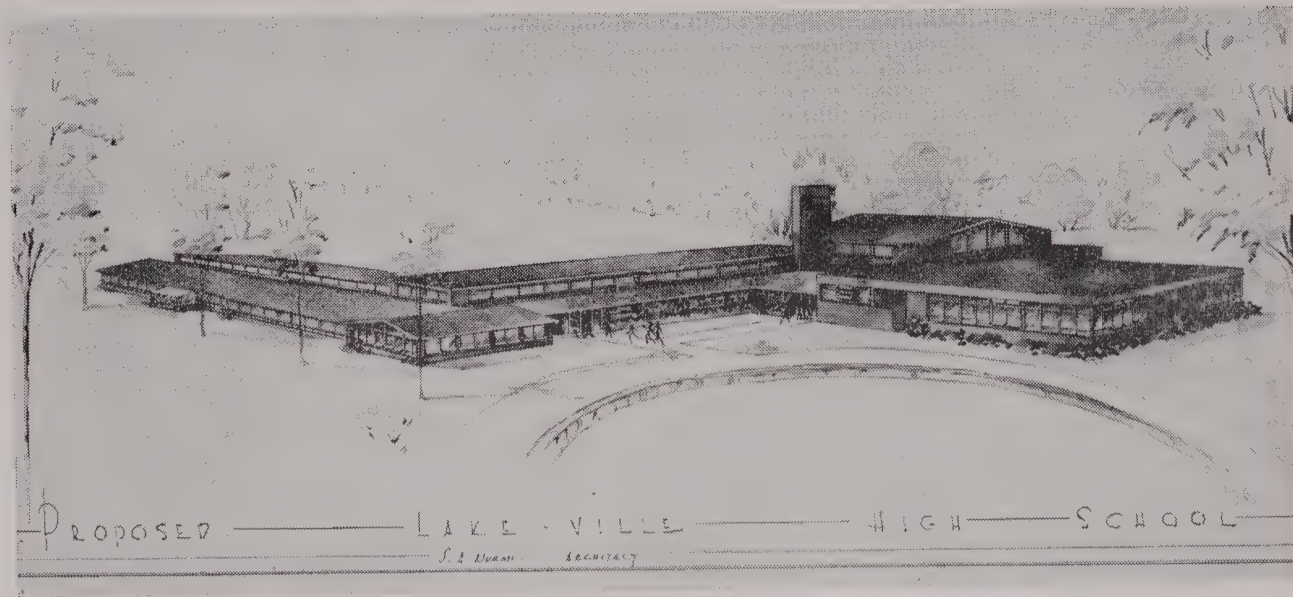


FIRST OTISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
(Built in 1879)

The top floor was used as High School;
the northeast corner was for the Intermediate
grades; the rest of the space was for the
primary grades.



SECOND OTISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
(Built in 1920)



ARCHITECT'S PRELIMINARY DRAWING OF
LAKEVILLE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Details concerning above School are given in this section.

his twelve grades at Flint Central, then went to Michigan University to get his law degree. He became successful in his calling, and would have been a District Judge if a lingering illness had not impaired his strength, so that he dared not accept the position. George Smith became a successful farmer, and Robert Misner went into the Buick factory in the very early years of its existence, and did not leave until it became time to retire. Margaret Judson, Eva Ide, Mabel Courts, Frances Brandt, Nellie Pettit and Ida Warren were the six girls.

Frances became a graduate nurse before marrying. All six became good, capable wives and mothers. Nellie passed away some three years ago. The others are still living.

In about 1912, District No. 2, known as Weeks District, voted to join District No. 5. In 1913 or 1914, the Weeks Schoolhouse was moved to the Village and placed on Beecher Street back of the Rogers School lot. It was a necessary move because the three-room school was getting over-crowded. Four teachers were now employed and a short while later five—then six, with a part-time music teacher. The primary department was placed in the small schoolhouse.

The enrollment kept growing so that in 1919, the District voted to build a larger school. The Board of Education tried to buy five acres on the north side of Grove Street where it met the (then called) State Road. Porter Clark owned what he called thirty acres on the north side of Grove Street between the street and the Pere Marquette Railroad. The District offered Clark \$1,000 for five acres, but he wouldn't budge, so the writer bought the whole thirty acres and sold the District the corner five acres they wanted.

This was the Laing Addition to the Village. In 1920, the brick school was built and was ready to be occupied by September of 1921. The first Superintendent was John Goudy, who had also served as superintendent the previous year in the old school building. He served two years in the new Otisville High School with Paul Misner as Principal.

He was followed as superintendent by Paul Misner, a young home town man who had graduated from State Teachers College at Ypsilanti. He signed a three-year contract, but at the end of two years asked to be released so he could take a teaching position in the college from which he had graduated. He is now in Washington serving as President of the American Association of School Administrators (A.A.S.A.)

From 1904 through 1913, Edmund Branch was the Principal in the Otisville Schools. From 1915 through the 1919-1920 school year he was Superintendent. The Otisville School became a twelve-grade school in 1914. The first four graduates were Hazel Johnson, Erma Knickerbocker, Eddison Davis and Lloyd Warner (the latter now (1956) is part owner and operator of the Otisville Elevator Company.)

A short time after moving into the new brick school it was placed on the University List. In 1934, Miss Adeline Kimball came into our High School to teach English and Latin classes

In 1941, she was advanced to the position of Principal, and holds that position still. Her years of teaching in the Otisville High School number twenty-two (1956), and she is now Principal of the consolidated high school. That makes her tenure of services the longest for anyone in our school system. Mr. Edmund Branch stands second and W. H. Begel third.

Mr. Branch taught either one or two years in the intermediate room before 1900, so in all he taught here at least sixteen or seventeen years.

By June, 1956, Otisville's school system had become a part of the unification of twenty-one school districts into one large—very large—District 21. Fifty years from now, will there be no more Otisville, Columbiaville or Otter Lake, but in their place LakeVille, the City of Many Lakes?

While good music was always a strong point in the life of Otisville, I can truthfully say it has also been a strong point in the school system. Those living who were pupils in school when the writer was Principal can well remember the ten-minute assembly of the whole school before beginning the day's work. How we did enjoy the songs!

After becoming a twelve-grade school, music became a good part of the curriculum. We have been blessed with several teachers of music who were much above the ordinary in musical ability. There was Miss Yvonne LaNoue who served several years. She was teacher of both vocal and instrumental music, with classes in school as well as private lessons. Her particular love of instruments was and is, first for the piano, and next, for the violin. She came to Otisville and into our school as a young, black-haired Miss—and she is still a Miss, and still a teacher of music although her classes are all private ones now. Her school classes in chorus singing were especially good.

There was another lady teacher of music whose musical ability was outstanding, especially as an accompanist and choir director. Her husband, Mr. J. C. McDonald, was Principal the two years she taught music here. While here Mrs. McDonald directed the Methodist Church Choir with distinction, and was aided by her husband's good tenor voice.

In 1953, Mr. Russell Goucher, with real musical talent, soon had the High School Band playing in tune, and the school choruses well balanced as to male and female voices. He is still with us as Director of the LakeVille High School Band.

Otisville can be justly proud of its school history. On the whole, the teachers, principals and superintendents have been of the best moral character. As to scholarship—look up the lives of some of the graduates!

As to ability of its athletes. While it was a class D school, because of the small enrollment, it was able to meet the Class C schools and out-champion them many times.

Now, pardon the writer for entering into the picture, but I had one of the most exciting moments of my life one particular day. The Field Meet was held in Ann Arbor. I was attending the meet with Paul, Jr. and Catherine. I was just helping them

pick a vantage position from which to watch the events when I decided I would have to get right down to the rail and keep my eye on what was going on. It soon began to rain and that part of the crowd without raincoats sought shelter nearby for a time. But I hung to my program and dodged back for shelter so as not to miss the green and white (school colors) doings.

Finally the Green and Whites lined up in their lanes for the Medley Relay. Bob Price was not far from the inner rail with the baton in his hand. The rain slackened until it was hardly a drizzle. The track was now muddy, especially the part near the rail. Here it was a small brook. The starter fired his gun and before the runners had reached the first bend Bob had a commanding lead. Then it was only seconds before my eyes were centered on the curve at the other end of the field, and there came Rollie Hughes splashing water and mud but well in the lead. He was so plastered with muddy water it was hard to tell who he was. Oh, happy day! I knew him from the "Wearing o' the Green." What an Otisville chorus of cheers arose as he touched the finish line with the emblem of victory in his hand.

The Medley Relay is run in this manner. It takes four to run it. The first runner takes in his hand a little baton, runs a quarter mile; the next runner takes the baton and runs an eighth of a mile; the third runner takes the baton and runs an eighth of a mile, then passes it to the fourth runner who runs another quarter of a mile. It is no easy race since the passing of that little staff on the run is very tricky and a very important part of the race.

In the race mentioned above, Bob Price took the baton, passed to Norton Averill, then he to Bob Haddix who passed it to Rollie Hughes, who finished. The same four ran the 880-race, changing positions so that Averill and Haddix took the first and fourth positions, while Bob Price and Rollie Hughes took the second and third.

Lorenz Daenzer, Secretary of the District No. 5 Board of Education for several years before the district became merged with the twenty other districts to become District No. 21, looked over what had been written very carefully and suggested it would be well to mention Cleo Cobb's service in taking over the instruction of the High School Band in the late 1930's. Even giving his time through the Summer Vacation to furnish concerts in the park Saturday evenings. Mr. Cobb had a very good band. Thanks, Mr. Daenzer, for suggesting that he be commended.

Music

By 1870 it had become very popular, almost necessary, many people thought, for every community to have a band. Otisville, even before it was incorporated, had a nucleus for one. There were James Averill and Watson Davis back from band duty in the Civil War, Thomas Averill, a brother, who could really make an organ or piano talk, the two Wilson brothers, Samuel and Naham, William Long and Dr. J. B. Laing, the M. E. Choir director. In the mid-1870's, by the time Otisville was incorporated, there was a bandstand almost in the street where State Road angled eastward, Naham Wilson, William Long and Watson (Wat) Davis lived across the line in Thetford Township, but as a majority of the members lived in Forest Township the band took the name of Forest Cornet Band. The other members of the band at its inception, I believe, were James Ostrander, Byron Burnell, Albert Hawley and Dr. E. D. Lewis.

Dr. Laing was elected director and the band was soon on the march. But right here trouble began.. The director was soon calling for harder music and many of the members objected. They wanted more noise, so another band was formed, and for a few years Otisville had two bands. The second band was called the Otisville Band, and for a time, the writer believes, was the most popular band. Many of the old band really loved music and loved to advance, which they continued to do.

Two cornet players, George Alexander and Charles Alexander, brothers; two Rogers brothers, Wallace, a cornet player and Peter (Pete), a baritone player; and Ed Toft had joined the Otisville Cornet Band. One day they came to father and said, "Doctor, your band plays more difficult music than does the other band. May we join your band?" Father replied that the band boys would be glad to have their help. By this time Weston (Wes) Averill and I had joined the Forest Cornet Band, the same evening, January 1, 1883.

Charles Alexander, when he attended Otisville High School, used to carry a cornet mouthpiece in his pocket. As he studied he would have it at his lips practicing triple-tongue-ing. He became as smooth at it as any cornetist the writer ever heard. As for Pete Rogers, for some time he was a beautiful baritone player in a band at the State Capital.



Seated, left to right: (1) Herbert Branch, baritone; (2) Edmond Branch, tuba; (3) Harry Branch, tenor; (4) Will Branch, tenor; (5) Ed Taft, slide trombone.

Standing, left to right: (6) Charles Rockwell, drum major; (7) Watson Davis, snare drum; (8) Frank Hamill, music boy; (9) James Averill, solo alto; (10) James Ostrander, bass drum; (11) Reuben Branch, alto horn; (12) Albert Hawley, b-flat cornet; (13) George Alexander, b-flat cornet; (14) Charles Alexander, (Wes Averill's horn. Wes was ill that day); (15) Dr. J. B. Laing, b-flat clarinet, director; (16) J. Calvin Taylor, b-flat cornet; (17) Paul L. Laing, e-flat clarinet.

The Forest Cornet Band was good enough to be asked by the Port Huron Band at one time to march down town with them from Central Park and serenade some of Port Huron's business places. It was a two-day stand. As we were leaving our hotel quarters on the second morning, the proprietor said to those in his office, "Gentlemen, there goes a Sunday School Band, but they can play music." There were many bands there that day, some larger than ours, since we numbered only twenty at the time.

Now I have mentioned William Long as one of the first members of the band. He played the big tuba. He was not the only Long that played in our band. He had a brother who was a musician. While the brother did not play in the band, he had a son who did, and he could play the smallest instrument in the band beautifully—the piccolo. This player we called "Shorty." Shorty Long, like his uncle Will, was short and stocky. Jolly, yes! The first day at Port Huron that time we saw Shorty come along in the park with a big ring of bologna, and was he happy! He said, "I was hungry."

It was not long after this Port Huron trip that some members of the band moved to other parts of the country. Others died, and it was not long before there was no band in Otisville. But there were still a few left of the two old bands and a few other band men moved into and near Otisville. The writer of this story, after his father's death, had directed the old band, and some of the old members, principally my pal Wes Averill, came and asked me if I would help to organize a new band. I finally said I would. I knew that would mean buying a new cornet for myself and having my clarinet newly corked, padded and oiled for my son, Kenneth, to play. All of this was done in March, 1914, and Otisville now had another band—and a good one—with some outside help when we went into other towns to play. Then we were fortunate in being able to get a fine tuba player and another cornetist from Flint. Before we disbanded Mr. Edmund Branch was hired as Superintendent of Schools, so we had a real resident tuba player.

As for vocal music, Otisville has had some excellent music teachers in our school system. Because of her accomplishments and her long standing, the writer must mention Miss Yvonne Lanoue first. But it was Mr. Russell Goucher who did wonderful work in getting the young men interested in chorus work. Back in the 1920's the school had no band, but it did have a good orchestra. There were several good instrumentalists available for local programs. Later on in the 1930's the school had a good band and part of the time an orchestra. The family of Fred Crawford contributed largely to both of these groups, and they also sang in the Methodist Church Choir—all six of them, three boys and three girls. Donna, the youngest, later was a soloist while attending Central Michigan College in the late 1940's. A Miss Lola Newman had some good vocal ensembles during the early 1920's, as did Miss Carol Chandler (later Mrs. Dan McCarty) in the late 1930's and early 1940's. Miss Newman put on Maypole dances and operettas and Miss Chandler some

good minstrels and operettas. There still are, as there always have been, a number of talented people about town who sing or play the organ or piano at funerals, weddings and other affairs.

In the early days of the Methodist Choir there was a funeral at the Weeks School at which the choir had been asked to sing. It so happened—it sometimes does—that two persons took it upon themselves to make some of the arrangements. One of those persons was afraid singing would be neglected, so he asked one of his neighbors if he and his daughter would sing. They did. In fact, they did much of it without an accompanist. The Otisville Choir consisted of Minnie Whaling, Linnie Doane, Etta Taylor, Nellie McCormick, Mabel Branch, Herbert Branch, P. L. Laing, Dr. Laing, Edmund Branch and Z. L. Stringer. I believe the first hymn was "Jesus Lover of My Soul." We started with a moderate legato tempo (that "we" was the choir including organist.) The other singers started with a slow—very slow—dirge tempo. Right there the explosion occurred. Mrs. Doane reacted with a vigorous snort. The two with the dirge tempo stuck to their guns and finished the hymn. Readers! Don't think wrong of Mrs. Doane. She was a fine Christian woman, not in the least frivolous.

For years, the only choir in Otisville was the M. E. Church Choir. The Baptist Society never got strong enough to support a full choir. The Free Methodist Church depended only on congregational singing. While the rule of the church leaves it up to the local group to decide whether there will be an instrument in their church, here they still think best to say no. The M. S. Church has been very fortunate in its choir membership. Many have been real musicians who loved to sing, to study and furnish music pleasing to the congregation as well as the pastor.

The first instrument was a reed organ played by Mrs. Joseph Myles. The second organist was Miss Belle McCormick, who had studied music at Albion. They cast aside the organ later and put a piano in its place. This satisfied until 1953. A campaign had been on to raise money for a church organ. The effort proved to be a success, partly because the choir director and organist had made such a courageous fight to overcome a lingering illness that eventually took her to her permanent home. The necessary funds were at hand, finally, so a committee was appointed to purchase the instrument. They selected a Baldwin organ. It was purchased and dedicated to the memory of faithful Madelyn Stimson Doane.

At about Christmas time, 1887, the M. E. Choir presented the first Cantata ever given in Otisville. The cast was fully robed in old Jewish style. It was under the direction of Dr. Laing, with Miss Belle McCormick at the organ. The robes, better called togas, were in reality chenille curtains. Not the chenille as of late times, but a much heavier cloth that took the place of shades when they were pulled across the window.

Those taking part were Mrs. P. J. Wilson, Mother Mary; Herbert Branch, Joseph (tenor soloist); Edmund Branch, King

Herod (bass soloist); Mabel Merriam, alto soloist; Minnie Whaling, soprano soloist; P. J. Wilson, Dr. Laing, P. L. Laing, the three Wise Men; Nellie McCormick, Angel From Heaven; Mrs. Lyman Newell and Mrs. Marsh Stringer. Of course this was given in the old church that was wrecked by a cyclone in 1919.

Times change, people change, choirs change. Two of the above cast were still singing in the Methodist Choir in 1946. Although for several years, while they were raising their families they had to stop. They came back into harness in about 1925.

Since that time several cantatas have been presented in the present church structure. The first one that comes to my mind is the one that combined two choirs, the regular choir and a girl choir under the leadership of Mrs. P. L. Laing. The girls' choir was stationed in the balcony, while the regular choir was in its regular position. To represent a chime, Charles Forsyth stood in the entrance of the church with a Masonic gong. As usual, in giving cantatas, the second row was seated higher than the first and the third row higher than the second. In that way the back voices were not blocked by those in front. The arrangement was liked by both singers and the audience, and it pleased the girls' choir to be able to take part. They did it beautifully.

This cantata had Mrs. Isabelle Burns at the piano. The two choirs numbered about thirty singers. The writer's memory picks out a cantata where the platform had to be built out at both ends to seat thirty-two singers, two of them from Columbiaville. These cantatas proved to be so well received they were presented in other churches by request.

By 1956, there were still four of the number that helped in the two last-named cantatas still singing in the choir. All of them were in the senior choir. Elizabeth Wade Lewis, who in her early days had taken vocal training, was the choir's soprano soloist for a long time; Ethel Averill Payne was a strong soprano who could carry the highest part in the women's a cappella sextet or octet. These two combinations were something out of the ordinary. Often they took their key from the piano, sang the number and then I would ask Madelyn to strike the key on the piano and would find they were still in perfect key. The other two of the four old singers were Marjorie Stimson Doane, the choir's alto soloist and Joy Davis, the capable acceptor of positions that were found vacant, who now is the church organist. Ardath Doane Templeton has been the choir director ever since the death of her aunt, Madelyn Stimson Doane.

The famous sextet that could always end in perfect key without any accompaniment consisted of Ethel Payne, Retta Wickham, Joy Davis, Marjorie Doane, Lucile Barden and Madelyn Doane.



OTISVILLE METHODIST CHURCH CHOIR

at the Golden Wedding Anniversary Celebration Ceremony of Paul L. and Nellie M. (McCormick) Laing
From left to right above, are: Mrs. Paul L. Laing (Nellie), Mrs. J. Barden (Lucille), Mrs. Burdette Doane
(Marjorie), Miss Phyllis Wearne, Miss Ilene Nelson, Miss Mary Davis, dtr, Mrs. Joy Davis, mother, Mrs.
Caroline Davis, dtr, Miss Edith Edgerton, Mrs. J. K. Nelson, Mrs. Bert Wickham (Reta), and Mrs. William
Payne (Ethel).

(Piano and accompanist at right, not shown; at left, director, the groom, not shown)

Photograph taken April 8, 1946

Athletics

Since its earliest days, even before it became an incorporated village, Otisville has been known all over this part of Michigan as a strong athletic center. Remember the year 1951, when it was heard all over the state: "Otisville is the new State Champion in Class D."

Going back to the middle of the 19th Century, our strong, sturdy lumberjacks, really supermen, had a baseball team that beat almost all the teams they came up against. The competing teams came mostly from Flint. After the games, they went home knowing that they had met a team that was a big surprise to them.

The leading pitcher of the lumberjacks was big Wallace Osborn. If Walter Johnson of the Washington Senators could throw a baseball faster than Osborne he must be almost more than human. Somewhere around 1880 Milford, Michigan, was known as a strong baseball town, and the people there must have heard lots about the Otisville lumberjacks, because when they once planned a big day's celebration it was the Otisville team that was asked so that the game would draw a big crowd.

The challenge was accepted. When the big day came, the greater part of the male population of Otisville and vicinity was in Milford for the day.

Up to game time that day there was a cocky bunch of rooters crowing for their lumberjacks. Finally, the visiting team was at home plate. The pitcher drew back and forth a couple of times, then threw the ball. Strike one! Again the pitcher swung back and forth and threw the ball. Strike two! Once more, that pitcher swung back and forth, then threw the ball. Strike three! Our boys found they had come up against a curve-ball pitcher, something entirely new to them! The game ended about 8 to 2 in favor of the home team.

But wait! It was a very short time after that game that a new family came to Otisville. They were a very good family. They brought a stock of merchandise for a general store, and a printing press, type, etc., for a printing office. That family came from Milford. The new merchant's name was Ed Bloomer, and he was a curve-ball pitcher. Oh, boys!

Whether Father's visit with Mr. Bloomer that day after the ball game had anything to do with the opening of the Bloomer store and printing office, I never knew. I only surmised. I do know that the Bloomers and the Laings were very good friends as long as they (the Bloomers) lived in Otisville. The Bloomer store was next to what is now the Masonic Temple. The printing office was the post office building. These two buildings were wrecked by W. H. Parker, together with the corner building, and the wreckage was taken to East Tawas in about 1952.

Mr. Bloomer was not here long before he was a star pitcher for an Otisville ball club that walloped a Millington team by the score of 30 to 1. There is something to remember about this game, for Andrew Harris was the Otisville shortstop in that game, and a young man by the name of Hodge (he could not have been more than 16 at that time) was the Millington shortstop. Several years after that game was played, Otisville was invited back to Millington for another game. We did not have a regular team at that time but a scrub team was picked up, Andrew Harris was one of the nine. I can't say positively that Andrew was the shortstop at that time. I am rather of the opinion that he was the catcher. I can say he had much to do with saving Otisville from a shutout.

Millington must have long rankled over Bloomer's pitching. At the time this game was played, there was a Central Michigan League, and one of the Bay City pitchers was a man by the name of Hodge. Harris remembered him well, and he remembers Harris. While I can't remember the names of all the Millington team, I can name some of them. Hodge was pitching, the catcher was a Vassar man, at second base or shortstop was William Cummings of Otter Lake, just back from Orchard Lake Military Academy, and Leonard Jobson, Thetford Township, with Evans, back from Ann Arbor.

Otisville had no real pitcher. Three fellows tried their best to pitch. They were walloped! I have no way of telling the exact score, but if we say the old score was exactly reversed we would not be very wrong. Only one man was responsible for Otisville's lone tally. That came about in this way. Otisville was at bat in the ninth inning with no score and two men out. Harris came to bat and hit a single which put him on first base with George Russell up to bat. Harris felt he (Russell) would not get a hit, so he stole second, then third, and, with the ball in Hodge's hand, started for home plate. The ball went from Hodge to the catcher, catcher to third baseman. By this time most of the Millington nine were lined up to stop Harris, but they did not stop him! He jockeyed back and forth, back and forth, then SLAM, he was home. Ty Cobb was never harder to stop stealing bases than was Andrew Harris.

While we have Harris on our minds, let's go back to the time he taught a school two miles north of Flushing. On the last day of school before the summer vacation this school had a big potluck dinner served on the schoolgrounds. In the after-

noon there was to be a big ball game between a team called the Indian Reds and a team from Otisville that had been asked to play by Harris, who was a member of the Forest Cornet Band.

This band came along with the ball club to furnish music. Your writer was with the band, and as the ball club unloaded, I heard a big Indian Red player come up to Harris and say, "What did you bring that bunch of schoolboys here to play us for?" (Remember, the Indian Reds were a team of big Irishmen, and the Otisville team were mostly boys out of high school.) Our pitcher had lately moved to Otisville from Saginaw with his mother, a widow lady who had just married Mr. Rumbold, our village blacksmith. The pitcher's name was Will Kranz. He might have been 18 years old, no older. He was a well-built boy about five feet eight inches tall, who had seen a lot of baseball.

Harris' answer to the Indian Red was: "Well, I brought the best we had—they may fool you". Andrew himself went in to catch for Otisville. Kranz was at his best that day and not one Indian Red got further than second base. One of them did get there, but not by stealing, for that was impossible with Harris catching and Arlie Rumbold protecting second base. You readers should have seen Andrew Harris throw a ball from home plate to second base. It always went on a bee line as if it had been shot from a gun. Rumbold took those throws bare-handed. Who is living today who could do it? The score that day was: Otisville 5, Indian Reds, 0.

In those days, all Otisville games were played on the Village Commons with, occasionally, a smashed window to pay for. Smashed windows did not stop the games. The funny games came when the Fats and the Leans had their one game of the year. The players were businessmen of the village. How I wish I could name all the players who took part in these particular games. I will mention those I can remember. The Fats were E. H. Alexander, Kinsley Pettit, E. J. Osband, Clark Seeley, W. H. Parker, Mart McComb, etc. The Leans were Milton Eckler, Z. I. Stringer, Peter Hart, R. J. Laing and myself, with others. Every player could pitch one inning. I had my turn and made a record that has never been equaled here. Andrew Harris had taught me how to throw a ball. I took my position in the pitcher's box, whirled and threw the ball straight over the plate. That first ball got the first hit off me. Next batter up! Again I threw that ball straight over the plate and waist high. The batter put out his bat right in front of the ball and hit number 2. Up came batter number three. It was not necessary to swing the bat, but when Will Parker came to bat he really did swing. There it went! A home run! And so it continued. There was not one walk in that inning. When Clark Seeley came to the plate he put the bat in front of the ball and he was on first base. The next batter got a hit and Clark started for second base. He stubbed his toe, landed on his belly, rocked back and forth a couple of times and, before he could get on his feet, the ball had

been retrieved by an outfielder, fired to second base, and Seeley was out! So went the inning. I can't remember how the other two put-outs were made, but a new record had been made for Otisville. Fourteen runs were made in one inning! I can't remember the final score, but the Fats won. Brother Ronald thinks the score was either 40-50, or 30-40.

Leslie Barden has just come in with a list of the players who took part in the game in Flint in 1926 between Otisville and Fenton. It was the final play-off game between the Champions of the north half of Genesee County and the Champions of the south half of the county. These were high school teams.

Before I tell of the game I wish to tell you of a notice our superintendent had received the day before from the State Athletic Director barring our third baseman, Gordon Scott, and our curve-ball artist, Milton Averill (also outfielder), from the right to play. If we had received the correct reason—it was that the Mt. Morris Superintendent wanted the game in which Otisville had defeated Mt. Morris, forfeited on grounds that Scott and Averill had played for money on a Thetford team. This claim was entirely groundless!

I am sorry I cannot give you the score of the Otisville-Fenton game by innings, I am not even sure which team came to bat first, but I believe Fenton did. First man up. Barden wound up and threw. The umpire called "Strike One." Barden wound up again—threw. The umpire called "Strike two." Once more Barden wound up and threw. "Strike three," yelled the umpire. No runs, no hits were chalked up by the scorer.

Up to bat came a seriously mad—in fact, very mad Otisville High School ball team. First man up had determination in his eye. The Fenton pitcher wound up, threw—WHAM (my word) away went the first hit of the game. Up came another batter equally determined. The Fenton pitcher wound up and threw. "Ball one," yelled the umpire. Again the Fenton pitcher wound up, threw. Crack went the bat and the ball sailed on a straight line between the left and center outfielder for a double, scoring the first run of the game. Up stepped the third batter. He hit a sharp single into right field and another Otisville score was chalked up. So went the game. At the end of two innings, Otisville had driven Fenton's leading pitcher from the box. At the end of the fourth inning, Fenton's second pitcher had been retired. At the end of the sixth inning, Fenton's third pitcher had retired from the game. Fenton had not scored, while Otisville had continued to lambaste the ball to all corners of the field. One of the Otisville hits was made by Cassius Doane—a home run that went so far no attempt was made to find it. Fenton did not come up for a seventh inning. What a game! Barden pitched the whole game and never was in trouble, and what perfect support Doane behind the plate, gave him. It was impossible for a runner who was lucky enough to get on base to steal second, for Doane's pegs to second were perfect. In fact, it was a wonderful ball team that won the Genesee County Championship by the score of 25-0 for Otisville that year (1926).

Any reader will want to know the names of the entire team that played. Here it is:

Leslie Barden, pitcher.
Cassius Doane, catcher.
Willard Johnson, first base.
Howard Metz, second base.
Arlie McComb, third base.
Hubert LaNoue, shortstop.
Byron Pettit, left field.
Clare Gooch, center field.
Everett Forsyth, right field.

Milton Averill and Gordon Scott were the two not allowed to play. Milton and Gordon, you were deprived of the right to play in the game, but all of us who saw the game felt your deprivation put a spirit into those who did play that made them more than human.

At the time this game was played I happened to be president of the Board of Education, so naturally I attended the game and took it upon myself to write the Athletic Director a stinging rebuke. I explained the boys he disqualified had never received one cent for playing on the Thetford team as claimed. They could both be called Thetford boys—for one lived in Thetford Township, and the other on the township line between Thetford and Forest. His father's farm reached over into Thetford. I told him it was a crime to disqualify them without giving their school a chance for a hearing. My letter was answered by return mail. He apologized for his mistake.

You readers will remember I mentioned Tyrus Cobb as a baserunner. You must also know that he was for, I believe nine years, the champion hitter of the American League. But I saw him come up against the pitching of C. D. Doane the first year he, Cobb, came to Detroit. He was a substitute outfielder that year, so it was possible for him to come to Rochester with the D. C. A. ball club, considered as probably the best amateur baseball club in Michigan. Rochester had a fine club at that time and Doane was their star pitcher. One day Doane saw me and asked me to go with him to see him pitch against the D. A. C.'s that afternoon. I went and saw Rochester, with Doane pitching, beat the D. A. C.'s 8-5. I believe that was the exact score. I can't say Cobb did not get a hit. I can say he did nothing spectacular against Doane's pitching.

Another fine Otisville pitcher, at that time, was Arthur (Art) Betts. He was only five feet six inches tall and his weight could not have been over 150 pounds, but he was what is called a "heady pitcher." It was said of him that his catcher could hold an empty tomato can where he, the catcher, wanted the ball, and Betts would throw the ball right into the can.

Games I saw and recorded in my farm diary of 1919-1925 were as follows: In 1919 and 1920 I had no son in football or baseball and I probably was not president of the Board of Educa-

tion. My diary does not record any games before June 15, 1921.

June 15, 1921	Otisville 1, Flint Central 2	(Baseball)
June 22, 1921	Otisville 14, Lapeer 0	(Baseball)
Oct. 14, 1921	Otisville 0, Davison 0	(Baseball)
Oct. 21, 1921	Otisville 24, Flushing 14	(Football)
Aug. 29, 1922	Otisville 11, Flushing 4	(Town Team B. B.)
Oct. 27, 1922	Otisville 20, Davison 6	(Football)
Apr. 22, 1923	Otisville 6, Mt. Morris 2	(Baseball)
June 8, 1923	Otisville 5, Gaines 2	(Baseball) Champs
Oct. 12, 1923	Grand Blanc 17, Otisville 0	(Football)
Oct. 19, 1923	Otisville 12, Davison 6	(Football)
Oct. 31, 1923	Grand Blanc 26, Otisville 0	(?)
Nov. 9, 1923	Otisville 19, Montrose 0	(Football)
Nov. 29, 1923	Clio 43, Otisville 6	(Football)

Otisville's six points in the Clio game was scored by Burdette Doane, who took a punt early in the game and was never stopped. Paul A. Laing, guard, was injured in the first half, but came back for the second half and finished the game.

In 1920, I did find these results. Otisville did take second place at the Field Meet, June 11th. Linden 4, Otisville 2. Linden was the champion that year. The Girls' outdoor basketball game was won by Otisville with a wonderful team. There was the field meet in 1921 on June 3rd, held at Flushing. In baseball the score was Otisville 6, Fenton 3. The Otisville team took the Genesee County Championship that year.

Otisville had little interest in track before 1920, or a little later, since the new school was not finished until 1920. It was 1921 before we really got started with an interest in track.

Doctors

A Dr. Griswold, who might be called the first resident physician of Otisville, owned a farm two miles east of the village. He stayed but a short time, then moved to Grand Blanc.

In 1863, Dr. Luke N. Begel came and remained for ten years. In 1874, he moved to Pine Run.

In 1871, Dr. J. B. Laing came and lived in the Village until 1903, when ill health caused him to quit the active practice of medicine and moved to his farm north of the village. He received callers there for a short time. He died April 6, 1908.

Dr. W. A. Nicholson came to Otisville about the same time Dr. Laing did. He lived on the south side of Main Street at the corner of Woodward Avenue. He was here only a few years. While here, he was associated with his son, a pharmacist who ran a drug store in the Hunton Block.

Shortly before 1880, Dr. E. D. Lewis came here from Canada. He never had an extensive office practice and finally gave it up entirely. Mrs. Lewis was a registered pharmacist, so the doctor bought the drug stock in the Hunton Block and sold his office building, but continued to make his professional calls.

The above-mentioned doctors were all graduate physicians and all had offices separate from their homes. During the lumbering days there was much sickness. Malaria, diphtheria, typhoid fever, infantile diseases, tuberculosis—all were prevalent. Minor surgery and teeth extraction were daily procedures. The human body is a wonderful thing to withstand what it did in those days, and many, many of its doctors should be glorified.

When Dr. Nicholson left Otisville, Dr. Wisner took his place for a short time, but soon moved to Columbiaville where he spent the rest of his days.

After Dr. Laing's death, Dr. Byron Jenne took over his office for a few years. He then took a special eye, ear, nose and throat course, moved to Detroit, opened an office in the Whitney Building, and still continues to specialize in his chosen work.

In about 1895, a Dr. Merchant—not a graduate physician—came to Otisville. He, somehow, had a license to practice medicine. He never attempted surgery or bone settings, but did dispense medicines, make calls, extract teeth. He always wore good frock coat suits, etc. In fact, he had some following. In January, 1908, he died suddenly at his home on Jefferson Avenue.



This building, first built by Dr. John J. Kurtz for home and office, was remodeled and later enlarged by Dr. E. C. Mosier. Photograph above shows the building as it appears in 1956.



The modern, up-to-the-minute well furnished office of Dr. S. S. Indianer, D. O., at 424 State Road, in Otisville.

In April Dr. Laing, my father, died. In May of the same year I was out in front of our store when Dr. Lewis, whose drug store was then the next door east of our store, stepped onto the sidewalk, turned the key in his door, passed the time of day with me and left for his home. Twenty-five minutes later I received a call to come to his home. He had died of a coronary attack.

When Dr. Jenne moved to Detroit, Dr. J. J. Kurtz took over his practice here and built the home with connecting office now known as the Dr. Mosier office. Dr. Kurtz stayed only a short time, then moved to Flint where he opened an office and still continues in his profession.

Dr. Clark Dorland took over his practice, but he also moved away so as to be near a hospital, I believe. At least he was soon on the medical staff of Lapeer Memorial Hospital.

In 1934, Dr. E. C. Mosier took over, and take over he certainly did! He not only took over the medical practice, but really became a civic leader. One of the first things he did was to build a large class of First Aid students. He made a wonderful instructor, and although his labors were all gratis, the friendships made paid more than money ever could. He became very interested in our school system, and was soon elected to the Board of Education. He served as President of the Board, which office he held for a considerable time.

His next civic work was to lead in the building of a fine community building, called Otisville Community Center. This building, or rather the larger one built after the first one burned, is really a part of the Otisville School System at present. It has furnished classrooms, and a large floor for school games, graduation ceremonies and other school activities.

If the Doctor's directions had been more closely followed, the writer feels, we might have had an Otisville High School today. Whether that would have been for the best is another question. The District No. 21 High School is a fine building to be proud of, but it needs much more money to finish the job.

Now, to go back to the doctors. Dr. Mosier is still with us, and is more competent than ever, for only two other doctors have served the community longer—Dr. Laing and Dr. Lewis. I mention Dr. Laing first because his service was the longest. In the matter of house calls he stands first. In the matter of office call he stands second—for in the matter of office calls Dr. Mosier stands far above all others. Dr. Lewis' time of service is so near that or Dr. Laing's that you might call it almost a dead heat between the two.

Although Dr. Mosier has moved to Flint, while still maintaining his full office schedule here, he is nearer to us now when we need him most. That is when we are hospitalized. He built his home near to the three hospitals—Hurley, St. Joseph and McLaren. It is important to his patients' welfare that Dr. Mosier is on the medical staff at each of these hospitals. He usually leaves it to his patient to decide where he wishes to be taken. In a recent talk with the Doctor, the writer learned he is much more interested in his patients and the general welfare of Otisville than most of us realize. We all knew the Wade Hall was too small

to accommodate all the necessary activities it tried to hold, principally the school activities. He realized it more than anyone else, so he immediately put his mind, body and soul into the building of a fine community hall. All that had been needed was a starter. The flame grew and grew—and success was soon accomplished. What a help the Center is to the needs of our school system!

Dr. Mosier also recognized there was a very serious health problem to be tackled. Again, his mind, body and soul went to work. Undulant fever was prevalent. The primary cause, the Doctor knew, was the milk which was not being pasteurized before being sold. We must give him much credit for the building of our fine Dairy Bar. Now, undulant fever is practically eliminated.

In 1928, Dr. F. J. Burns came to Otisville. He and Mrs. Burns bought the Wellington Hunton property. Mrs. Burns still owns some of the property, including the large house with the lovely stairway. Dr. Burns was the only Homeopathic Doctor ever to settle in Otisville. He died this year (1956), leaving, besides his family, many good friends, some of whom thought his ways were the only ways in some kinds of illness.

Dr. S. S. Indianer came here in 1951. He rented a home of Lawrence Henderson for two years, then bought a fine home in Davison, so that he might be nearer hospitals. At first he rented the Dittmar Gift Shoppe building for an office. By 1956, he had bought the building, enlarged it and made it over into a fine air-conditioned office equipped with up-to-date doctor's furniture and up-to-date heating system, so that now he has an office he can be justly proud of. He has office hours five days each week, but he stands ready seven days a week to answer all calls, day or night. He is on the medical staff of the Flint Osteopathic Hospital.

Otisville's first Osteopathic physician was a young doctor named Thomas Kerns. The baseball and football teams will never forget him, for he was really part of the team. He was always on hand to minister to any hurt or injury to one of the players. How he was missed when he left Otisville around 1927.

There were several other doctors who spent some time in Otisville. There was hard-drinking Dr. Elliott, who did some surgery and some bonesetting for Dr. Merchant. It was Dr. Elliott who said to me one day, "There are times when my appetite for liquor is so strong that if I stood on one side of hell, with liquor on the other side, I would do my best to try to get it." Drink finally got the best of him.

There was Dr. Allen, who came to Otisville from Fostoria. One day he lost an elderly patient. I went to him to get the cause of death. He said, "What will I put down here?" Then he wrote "infirmities of age." He said, "That is as good as any doctor could do." Although he often appeared careless, he was definitely a brilliant person and apparently well educated. One day he had his wife call an ambulance and was taken to Hurley Hospital where he died a few hours later from pneumonia.

There was young Dr. DeFoe, he of the fine bass voice. He was called when Dr. Lewis was stricken. He said, "If I only had

so-so, naming a certain drug, I could save him."

Before leaving the history of the doctors of Otisville, it is only right to describe something of the life the doctors who came here in the 1870's had to endure. What will be written here is not one bit of hearsay, because the writer was born and grew up in a doctor's home during that era. Our doctors of that day were really pioneer settlers. They came to serve those who were felling the trees, sawing them into logs and the logs into lumber to build houses and business places for themselves and others, and for those who were clearing the land, stumping it and making farms. Those doctors' bodies had to be as strong and rugged as those of the lumbermen. They traveled by horseback, by horse and buggy, and many, many times on nothing but the legs they were born with.

There were no good roads. At many places the sand was very deep; in unseasonable weather and often in seasonable weather the wheels sank nearly up to the axle on the muddy clay roads. For several years there was no such thing as office hours for the doctors. In fact, there were no offices at all. There were no telephones, and if a person got sick a member of the family, or a neighbor, went to the doctor's home for help. If illness happened at night and a buggy or sleigh could not be used, it meant a trip on foot or horseback. Many times a buggy could be used for part of the way, then it was "get out, tie the horse to a tree and hoof it the rest of the way." A dark night meant the use of a lantern.

There were few hospitals in Michigan in those days. Harper Hospital, in Detroit, was considered to be a great institution. In fact, Father left Ann Arbor and went to Detroit for his senior year in medical college because of the meager hospital facilities at the University. At the large Harper Hospital he could see more sick cases.

In the 1870's, a doctor's medical case, or I might say bag, contained many doses of quinine. There were no capsules then. Father would take a sheet of paper, cut it into pieces about two inches square, spread them out and place a dose of quinine or some other powder on each piece with a spatula. Perhaps he might place a mixture of two or more different powders on each of the squares and leave me to fold them up. I soon became quite proficient at that job. What a help it was when capsules and tablets were invented.

Long before dentists became prevalent there was a two-quart glass can filled with teeth Father had extracted, sitting on a lower shelf. In those days few people, except doctors, knew any such words as peritonitis or appendicitis. They were called "inflammation of the bowels." Now, we speak of T.B. Then, to laymen, it was all "consumption."

As for minor surgery, there was plenty of it. The razor-sharp axes used by the lumbermen, the whirling saws used in the mills turning out lumber, shingles and peavey handles, the sharp cutting machines turning out barrel staves, all brought many men to Father. Some had toes, parts of feet or fingers and even hands gone. How vividly I see it all! I was the oldest of Father's sons and I had barely passed my tenth birthday before

I was sometimes called to put drops of chloroform on the mask over the nose and mouth of the patient to put him to sleep. The surgeon of Father's day had no helper who had studied to be a specialist in the field to administer the anesthetic. I have watched Father so many times while he was keeping his eyes on his instruments as he worked, and keeping his eyes on his patient as I was dropping the chloroform. As if it were only yesterday, I can still hear his voice as he would say, "a little slower" or "a little faster." As I dream of those days, my mind and heart fill with pride as I realize the trust Father put in me.

There have been three people close to me who seem to have unbounded faith in me. First, there was Nellie (my wife); second, there was Father, and third, there was Nellie's father. Many were the times their faith helped me to keep on the right path.

Now, before I leave this part of the history I wish to tell you of Father's faith in his horse, Charley.

DR. LAING'S FRIEND CHARLEY

Charley was a horse but if there is any such thing as a human horse Charley was one. He was born in the late 1870's of Morgan strain. He weighed about 1,000 pounds. He was bay in color, had a beautiful head and an arched neck. In fact, to catch him in any position, he was the picture of a perfect horse. When he traveled, he was as proud a stepper as human eyes ever saw.

Father bought him off a race track when he was three years old. Father saw in him just what he wanted, and he got a prize. In a very short time after Charley came to his new home, it was very noticeable that here were a man and a horse who knew each other and trusted each other. Father would drive up to a patient's house, throw the lines over the dash, leave Charley untied, go in to see the patient, come out to the buggy, climb in and as he did so, Charley would turn his head to see when he touched the seat and was off before the lines were in Father's hands. No check-rein was needed for that arched neck, those forelegs stepping high; such was the way the man and horse trusted each other.

Many, many the times when they were on night calls and after the patients had been looked after Father would be sleepy and wrap the lines around his body and doze off. Charley would as much as say "Sleep on, I know the way," and Father would wake up at the barn door.

A drive on Christmas Eve, 1881, showed Charley's strength and endurance. Father's brother James was Superintendent of the Flushing Day School, and of the Presbyterian Sunday School. A large Christmas tree was placed in front of the church for the exercises as was the custom in those days. So my uncle and his wife, who were to spend Christmas Day with us in Otisville were unable to leave until Christmas morning. Father drove to Flushing on Christmas Eve, taking me with him. In order to accommodate three passengers besides himself, he used his two-

seated carriage and hitched up Charley with one of Dr. Lewis's prize roadsters. The roads were frozen and smooth. Flushing is 24 miles from Otisville.

We left Otisville at 5 P. M. and arrived in Flushing at 7 P. M. Charley had never before been hitched up double, and as much as said to the Lewis horse, "If you keep up with me you will go some!", and so he set the pace. Up hill and down hill, there was no holding him back. Father stopped them twice to give each of them one-half a pail of water. The last two or three miles the whippetree of the Lewis horse kept hitting the tire on his side. Twenty-four miles in two hours. It was almost unbelievable then.

There was another good trait in Charlie and I hardly know what to call it. While my folks never kept hens, our neighbors did. The result was that there were hens in our barn most of the time. In the springtime there were chickens as well as hens, and Charley never stepped on a chicken. In fact, when chickens were around his feet he would not step without turning his head to see where it was safe to step. The writer has many times watched him study out the place to step. Can I use the word thoughtfulness? Now I have.

Pride, dependability, stamina and thoughtfulness. Charley excelled in all four.

R. J. Laing, the nightmare boy, six years younger than the writer, had many night experiences with Charley. Many a time he awakened me from sleep in his nightmare. He would be sitting up in bed and driving Charley. He would be pulling on imaginary lines and crying: "Whoa Charley, Whoa Charley." He would be pulling (oh so hard). Awaken him? Impossible! He has even yelled so hard that he wakened Father, who came up to our room, and both Father and I could not wake him up. Finally he would fall back, still in sleep. It was always Charley he would be driving in his sleep.

After writing about Father's Charley, I wrote to Brother Ronald asking him how much he remembered about Charley.

Almost immediately he sat down and answered my letter. He thought it queer that I could ask him if he could remember Charley. In his letter he wrote almost angrily, don't talk of Charley and leave out Towser. We did not have Charley very long before Father came in from one of his morning drives with a dark-haired puppy, and we boys were happy. Towser was part bulldog, a natural fighter. In a very short time, horse and dog were iriends for life. Towser was still quite young when Charley had a pal to go with him on all his day drives. At night, Towser had a duty to perform, a duty which he performed so beautifully that it was not necessary to lock the front door when Father was called out. Mother and Father both felt contented with Towser on guard. He would not bark when there was the slightest or loudest noise outside the house. When he detected any unusual noise, he would go into Mother's bedroom, up to her bed and growl in a low tone. Mother with Towser close at her heels, was up and moving.

As an example, there was a west porch leading off our dining room. One night when Father was away on a call Mother was wakened by Towser's low growl. She got up, led by Towser to the door opening onto the porch and opened it. A man turned to run. Without a bark Towser had him by one leg. The man got away as fast as he could with a dog hanging to one leg. That man never once got free until he was far away from the Laing property.

It seemed at times that Towser waited for Father's calls for when Father started for the barn to hitch up Charley, his pal reached the barn first. When Father would drive out and reach Main Street, Towser was there waiting and as Father made the turn, either east or west, Towser would streak ahead, turn and lope back, come under the carriage and get so close to Charley's heels that he would have to swing his head from side to side so as not to be hit in the face; then out he would go between Charley's feet and a front wheel, then ahead again. He would go like a streak.

Woe to a cow, horse or a hog that was loose in the road. The cow or horse would get his heels nipped. As for the hogs, Towser used the same tactics he always used in his fights with dogs. He would have hold of a piece of ear and cheek in his jaws, and it was only choking by a human being that could release that vise-like grip. Father had one hog to pay for. It died trying to get back to its pen.

There was a time when Charley's strength outlasted Towser's. That was on the fast trip to Flushing. For the last few miles there was a dog's tongue lolling, and it was a discouraged, weary dog that stayed about four feet to one side of the carriage.

All life comes to an end, but the end of Towser was rather pathetic. Towser became sick and Charley became lame. For a time Charley's lameness and Towser's sickness were so severe that they went on no drives. Then, there came a day when Father thought it best to use them for a short drive. He had two calls to make, one of them of about two miles. He pulled up to the first and went in to wait on the first patient. When he came out he found there was a dog fight on. The patient's dog, much larger than Towser, had come nearer the buggy than Towser thought he should. Towser had sprung and had his usual hold. Father twisted his collar and choked him off.

On to the next house they went. When Father came out, Towser was up in the buggy, a place he had never been before, his eyes directed toward the house as if looking for Father to come out. But this world was a thing of the past for him now.

Charley's hard driving days were over. Father turned him over to one of the men who had helped me to build a farm. Cultivating and light work in the garden Charley could still do, and it was not into a stranger's hands that he was going.

Funeral Business

Before 1900, the funeral business, for the most part, was a very crude affair. The writer's first experience with a funeral happened when sister Gertrude, then fourteen months old, died. Two neighboring women were there and spent the night so that Father and Mother could go to bed. I presume the next morning Mr. Kellogg, the casket maker, was called to make a little casket and rough box. With few exceptions there was no embalming done in those days, and there were no exceptions in our part of Michigan. The next day there was a quiet funeral in our home. I spent the time out of doors, so I cannot tell just what went on in the house. I was only four years old and cannot remember going to the cemetery, but I can tell well what was always found those days when the funeral party reached the cemetery. There would be a pile of dirt by an open grave. There would be two planks, one on each side of the grave, a short two-by-four resting across the head of the grave on the planks and another two-by-four at the foot of the grave. Every cemetery had a pair of straps, placed by the sexton, one lying on each two-by-four. These straps were used by the bearers to lower the casket into the grave. Country cemeteries at that time were never well cared for. The result was terrible to think of.

I had gone up on the floor over Mr. Kellogg's lower floor and watched him make caskets. The length and width across the shoulders of the departed had to be given with the order. The building where I watched Mr. Kellogg work when I was six years old still stands in 1956, a dilapidated wreck on Otisville's Main Street. (For shame!).

I had never expected to become a funeral director until November of 1901. On May 8th—or a day or two later—in 1900 I had taken J. H. McCormick as a partner in the Grocery, Furniture and Funeral Business. He was to take care of the funeral end. In November of the next year, he became ill with chronic bronchitis. A few days later Mr. Chris Osborne dropped to the sidewalk on his way home from town, stricken with a heart attack. From that moment, I added funeral directing to my many other duties. My young life in a doctor's home and my study and teaching of physiology now became a valuable asset. So

much did they help that after studying one book on embalming and another on funeral directing, and attending two weekly lectures by professional embalmers, I was the first of over four hundred who took the examination in 1903 to hand in my papers and get my license.

Many embalmers of those days boasted of how quickly they could embalm a body. That kind of embalmer is not wanted now. The writer sincerely believes that the vast majority of embalmers today handle the body gently, with the thought in mind that this is somebody's dear one.

To go back to May 1, 1900, when I bought O. E. Snyder's Grocery Store and stock, I had to assume Snyder's part of a contract between himself and a Mr. White of Mt. Morris. It was a three-year contract which still had one year to run. Mr. White owned the building, the furniture stock and the undertaking business, including a small stock of caskets. He never increased the stock. I had taken in McCormick as a partner, and we attended to the purchasing of all stock in our name. Mr. Snyder had only been a renter and agent of Mr. White. On May 1, 1901, Mr. White came into the store at 9:00 A. M. He wanted to sell the business to us, and asked what I would pay for it. I offered one thousand dollars. He would not accept that price, he said. Through the day he continued to haggle on the price, but at 5:00 P. M. he came to me and said he would have to take it.

The double store Parker and Dunston had built was vacant. It had come into the hands of Mr. Marsh Stringer of Milford, Michigan. We moved into it, and it was not long before dry-goods, boots and shoes, men's clothing and haberdashery, crockery, wallpaper, tanks of oil and gas, soda draft and ice cream had been added to the business. The furniture side of the business did not get enough attention to make it grow, but the funeral portion did grow. Father McCormick's health did not improve. He directed few funerals, and before 1903 the management and directing was done by me alone.

In April of 1913, Dr. Jenne's prediction that no one could stand the pace at which I was going for long came true. I went to bed, and the business, with the exception of the furniture and undertaking, had to be sold. I alone kept that part. I moved into Mrs. Lansfield's part of the Lansfield Block, now occupied by Ada's Tavern, with furniture and caskets. The funeral business continued to grow.

By September of 1913, Helmka & Vogelsburg had failed, and bankruptcy followed. I bought the stock, which was disposed of in about five years. That enabled me to move into the Corner Store Building. I then disposed of the furniture business and put up a partition dividing the main floor from north to south. Of the west part, I partitioned off an office at the north end. That gave me a neat casket room. I rented the east side of the main floor to Adelbert Myers for a good grocery store. The arrangement was most congenial for both Mr. Myers



LAING-ROBINSON FUNERAL HOME



FUNERAL HOME AS SEEN FROM THE WEST SIDE

and myself. The same front door gave entrance to both grocery store and the funeral parlor.

By this time, the Laing private home had become a funeral home as well, since Nellie and I had built a funeral chapel, attached to the east side of our home. We had also added a good-sized bathroom and a modern preparation room with a hall leading past the bathroom from the preparation room to the chapel. The lighting system was modeled and built by my brother-in-law, Mr. Walter Vastbinder. It was very different from others, and a wonderful success.

Paul Jr., my son, had grown up as my assistant, had attended and graduated from Embalmer's College, and had passed the state examination.

He was taken into the business as an equal partner. He had the build, the bearing, the pleasant way of meeting people that made him a natural for his chosen profession. His mother and I were jubilant, and the business continued to prosper. The territory we covered had increased steadily, so we had added four and one-half feet to the west and four and one-half feet to the north side of the first floor of the house and a second floor above. This gave us a large display room where we could show eighteen adult caskets without crowding.

All went well for some time; then, Paul Jr. became so affected by the pollen from the funeral flowers that he had to go to Northern Michigan at first for a few weeks, then for a few months, and finally he had to confess that he would have to give up being a funeral director. Things change so easily! Paul's dreams were hit hard as were Nellie's and mine.

On April 29, 1946, just three weeks after Nellie and I had celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary, she passed away. My business problem then was to dispose of my funeral business. Fortunately, my granddaughter, Norma Jean, had married a young man, George Robinson, who had fitted himself to become a funeral director. He is now not only the owner of the business, but also of the home. I still have my bedroom to occupy, and I board with Norma Jean, George and the three lovely Robinson children. So ends this story of the Laing Funeral Home and the beginning of the Laing-Robinson Funeral Home.

Now, to go back to the many changes that came about during my fifty years in the business and as an actual participant. I was describing straps used by the bearers to let the casket down to the bottom of the grave.

The first lowering device I know of was made in Ovid, Michigan. It did the work well, but was long and rather cumbersome to handle. The first improvement was a brake that let one end be tipped in to shorten the device so that it could be placed in a shorter space. Then followed the metal devices that could be so broken up that one man could carry them and they could be placed in any car. You have all seen the device of today. Matting, dirt covers, grave-liners, green grass, tents,

casket placers and other gadgets which you see today came into use later.

The early hearses were horse-drawn vehicles with a high seat in front where the funeral director sat with his driver. What a lovely place it was to ride with the temperature below zero and a northwest gale blowing so that you had to screen your face with one gloved hand for a few minutes, and then change to the other hand while you placed the cold hand under the robe and between your legs to warm it!

An unusual experience happened one rainy night. Mr. Clark, with his fine team, was my driver. We met the train at the depot in Otisville, since the body came by train. The boxed casket was placed in the hearse and we were ready to go. The funeral was to be held the next day from the Columbiaville Methodist Church. That meant a six and one-half mile drive in the rain, and it was a real rain. To add to our pleasure, it was somewhat windy. We had a good rubber laprobe, and both Clark and myself had rubber coats. On our heads we wore cloth caps, and I carried a large umbrella which I immediately raised. We reached Main Street and turned east on our way to Columbiaville. Long before we came to the turn south between the lakes a gale of wind struck the umbrella. The result was that it was turned inside-out and ruined, and our caps were drenched and dripping water. Our next task was to see that no water—or as little as possible—got under the robe. Cocked up on the seat at the front of a hearse! Those were the days! Fortunately, by about 1910, auto hearses had come to stay.

It has been easy for me to write much of the inside history of Otisville's funeral business, for, as a boy, I not only saw caskets built, but for some reason by the time I was eight years old I was often called to be a bearer for a child's funeral. Then, from the time I was sixteen up to the time I went into business in 1900, I sang as a member of the Methodist Choir at several funerals. All this added one quarter of a century to the one-half century during which I was a funeral director—making quite a lifetime's experience, all in Otisville.

George Robinson is now the sole manager of the business and has made some changes in the equipment. Notably, he has dispensed with the service car and added a combination hearse and ambulance. He has also made several interior arrangements, besides adding a 15x30 dining and living room, as well as another bathroom. He now provides an ambulance service at any hour of the day or night for Otisville and the surrounding community.

SAD THINGS

One July evening of 1932, a call came into the Laing Funeral Home that Bartlett Braley had drowned in the Cobble Knoll Lake and the body had not been recovered yet. Paul Laing Jr. and I hurried to the lake with the service car and a cot. Paul was clothed in swimming trunks. Someone had procured a grappling hook and a rope from the nearby gravel pit headquarters.

Paul was a fine swimmer as was Arlie McComb who was

near at hand. The boys first tried diving, as at least two other boys did, but to no avail! By this time Groves & Company Ambulance Service from Flint had arrived with another grappling hook and rope, so there were four good swimmers soon at work, two at each hook and line. Back and forth, back and forth. For nearly half an hour the search continued.

Finally, Paul and Arlie called for a boat, which brought in the body. Bartlett's mother had arrived by this time and ordered the body taken to the Laing Funeral Home.

There are reasons for this account going into this history. First, although there are six lakes in the immediate vicinity of Otisville, there have been only two drownings, which fact seems rather remarkable to me. Second, Barlett was waiting for his senior year in Otisville High School to start in September. He was a star halfback on the football team, fast and brainy, usually running ahead of his fullback, Cecil Lindsay. The two worked together beautifully, and were a great help to the team.

Third, all who knew the raising to near-manhood of Bartlett by his widowed mother, Marian Braley, had great admiration and respect for her. Those who remember Bartlett will also remember his brother, Gus Braley, who lived with him at the Mark Seeley home on Dodge Road.

Special Days

1880'S AND 1890'S

The Fourth of July as celebrated in the 1880's and 1890's was, next to Christmas, the biggest day of the year for the young folks. About two days before the Fourth hammers and saws were busy building bowery dance halls and stands where candy, lemonade, etc., were to be sold. Of course, firecrackers, torpedoes and cap pistols had to be part of the stock in trade. The hot dog stage had not been reached, as yet. Lemonade would hardly be allowed today as it was made then. It was made on the street before your eyes, in washtubs, or even wash boilers. Few glasses were used and they were rinsed by dipping into another tub of water. The rinse water was not changed very often, and there was little protection from the street dust. The sellers' cry was: "Roll up—tumble up—any way to get up! Ice cold lemonade, five cents a glass!"

It must be that it never rained on the Fourth in those days, for bowery dance halls, in particular, cost much work and money to build. Those who made the hall a business had the floors built in sections and kept them in storage from year to year. The cost of the music for a dance hall was little. A small organ, two violins and a banjo or snare drum furnished music enough to gladden the hearts of the dancers, and how they did shake their feet! No wonder Henry Ford loved the square dance, for that was the big IT for dancers in his day. The big doings started at 4:00 o'clock in the morning by the booming of the village cannon, which ended the sleep of the old and the young. The crack, crack crack of firecrackers started early and continued throughout the day.

The parade, led by the band, started about 10:00 A. M. The crowd would follow to the park where a program was given. First, came the invocation, then the reading of the Declaration of Independence would be next. I well remember one Fourth when the chairman of the day announced "The Declaration of Independence will now be read by a lovely young lady with a beautiful voice, whom most of you know well, Miss Mabel Merriam."

After the reading, the speaker of the day was introduced. He did not get far with his speech before the young members of the crowd began straying off, leaving the old folks to hear the finish.

Then came the games: first, the 100-yard dash, then the fat man's race, the girls' race, the three-legged race, the potato race, the climbing of the greased pole and catching of the greased pig followed in order. All this time the band was entertaining those of the crowd not interested in the games. After the games the dance halls were going full blast. In fact, it was apt to be near 6:00 o'clock the next morning when the last dancers were

tired out. Of course there was always a big display of fireworks in the evening.

Were there any casualties in those times? Yes! Many minor ones occurred, like two in my own family which happened later on in about 1909 or 1910. Kenneth had a cap pistol and was curious to know what was in the cap to make it explode, so he tore one apart. He found out—for it exploded and turned one thumbnail—not off—but loosened it so that it turned up. Father had to get it in its proper position and tape it in place so it would stay there. Paul was about five years old when he wanted to fire his first firecracker. Father gave him one, told him how and when to throw it. He lit the fuse, then told Paul to throw it. Instead, he grabbed it more tightly in his hand. Father yelled “throw it” and grabbed Paul’s arm and shook it, but the thing exploded right in Paul’s hand.

Some things happened in Otisville back in those Fourth of July celebrations that I am sorry to have to report, but in order to have the true picture of Otisville, as it was then, I cannot leave them out. There were brawls, fights, drunks, arrests aplenty. I well remember coming by the Branch House when a bareheaded man came out of the front door with blood streaming down his face from numerous cuts on the top of his head. He had become rather unmanageable and wanted to clear the house. At last, Tom Branch jumped upon the bar with a beer bottle and smashed it over the drunk’s head.

One Fourth it was reported (I can’t vouch for the authenticity of the report) there were twenty-one drunks laid out on the hay upstairs in the hotel barn. I can truthfully say there were many such hilarious Fourths. The drunks in those days were all men. Women did not drink then, with few, very few exceptions.

HORSE-TRADERS’ CONVENTION

This compendium of events in Otisville has already told how the Fourth of July was celebrated in the latter part of the 19th Century, but as we came into the 20th Century a few original-minded men got together, saying among themselves, “Let’s show our people something new in entertainment that will relegate the former Fourth celebrations to the background. Let’s have a two-day Horse Traders’ Convention.”

Don’t forget, if you are old enough to think back into the early 1900’s, that Charles D. Parker and George Buck must have had much to do in making the event a big success—for it brought into town people from all nearby counties. The horse traders all brought their trading nags. What a time! Of course there were games and games, horse races and horse races. Bird Root was especially interested in the horse races.

The first year’s success brought another convention the next year. These conventions did not fill the business men’s cash drawers, but they did bring together a crowd of old friends who were made happy for the day—or two days.

Could those days have been the starting point of our Annual Home-Comings?

Home-Coming Festivals

This is written on August 15, 1956. Today, there are living in and very near Otisville people who have never had any other home than Otisville. They were born here, have done their life work here and will die with no other home but Otisville. Many, many babies have been born here, spent their childhood, their teen-age years here, then moved away, but never forget the old settlers, and how they do enjoy getting home once a year. For several years the Home-Comings were sponsored by our local Fire Company, and later by the American Legion.

Each year the sponsors would appoint a committee to see that a contract was drawn between the Village Council and some reputable traveling company equipped with Ferris Wheel, Merry-Go-Round and all the usual tents and equipment that goes with their business. Two big days for the children and happy reunions for families and friends were always part of the Home-Coming celebration.

For a couple of years now we have had no Home-Coming, for two reasons:

First, perhaps, because the State of Michigan took over most of North Street in re-routing of the State Road (M-15). Secondly, because the event was becoming too much of a carnival—some-what spoiling the home spirit.

Now the question is, what will take its place?

Early Episodes

Today, if the buildings just north of the Village Park and all the shrubbery in the park were removed and the ground leveled, you would see where all the ball games were played during the early days of Otisville.

A funny incident happened during one of the games. I can't recall the name of the visiting team. The home plate was at the north end of the field and the first base not far from State Road. As usual the crowd of bystanders was nearer the baseline than was safe. The crowd was large. Among them stood Thomas Branch. Back of him and a little to his right stood Daniel Law. A foul ball came toward Mr. Branch. He ducked and the ball broke the nose of Mr. Law, who immediately began cursing Branch for ducking when he knew he, Law, was right behind him. I suppose Law thought Branch should have caught the ball—or at least deflected it.

The above recalls to mind the uniforms worn by one of our early ball clubs. They were white and home-made. The caps have disappeared from memory as have most of the uniforms, but there is one pair of pants that could not be forgotten.

Frank Goslen's mother had used sheeting for material and must have used a pattern for different pants. The result was that Frank looked as if he had on a pair of his mother's drawers.

There was the funeral in the old church when Bert Kinsman's father-in-law and Mr. Judson came in together. There were two empty seats in about the fourth row from the back. The father-in-law's seat was down so he sat down. Mr. Judson's seat was up, but he too sat down, the result being that he sat down farther and hit the floor. He suffered no serious injury and the funeral went on after a brief pause.

A few years before the old Methodist Church was wrecked by a cyclone the minister, a fine man, but not always tactful in his remarks, was conducting the funeral of an active, energetic man named John Philpott. The funeral was from the old church and the seats were filled. Referring to the many good qualities of the departed, among them his energy at work, he, the minister, told the following:

"A man by the name of Bill Smith lived in a small village. He was not like Mr. Philpott. He was just the opposite. He was

lazy, slothful and indolent to the extent that the other townsmen had to feed him. Finally they tired of it and by vote decided to bury him alive. He slept much, so one time when he was in a prolonged sleep they chose that time to have his funeral. During the service one man changed his mind and said, 'If you will give him one more chance I will furnish one bushel of corn.' Right there Bill woke up, raised up in his casket and said, 'Will it be shelled? I can't husk it.' After the funeral, the good wife of a farmer living two miles north of Otisville said to her family, "If I should die while that minister is still in Otisville, don't you dare have him for my funeral—for if you do I will surely wake up and climb out."

The above is told about an M. E. minister and happened long before the Southern Methodist Protestant and Methodist Episcopal denominations united. The next one is about a Free Methodist minister.

The use of automobiles had begun and ministers, who had no particular love for horses, were glad to see something that would take their place. Well, Rev. Crippen bought a used car of William Root, father of Merritt and Lloyd Root. He could start it all right, but when it came to stopping it he could not think of how to do it. This happened before his church bought a parsonage, and he lived in the house which was the home of L. K. Henderson for many years. In the contract of sale it was stipulated that Merritt was to teach the Reverend how to drive. Playing it safe, he would keep the car in low gear (it had a one-cylinder engine able to go fifteen or twenty miles an hour) but he just could not learn how to stop it. About the first day he owned it he started to drive around the village block. He made the round all right, then another round, and perhaps was on the third round when he called for help on Main Street. Someone was good enough to jump on the car and stop it. It so happened that back-of the C. W. Phipps Store (and not far from Rev. Crippen's home) was the Phipps stable and ice house, so Crippen's next move was to drive into his yard and hit the ice house. How long this continued I cannot say and leave it up to the readers to ask Merritt Root.

Characters

If you go over the country into several villages, you will find in every one of them some character, or characters different from all others. It may be in posture, movement, speech, facial expression, or some other quality.

We call those persons characters—not in a derogatory way—but they stand out out as different from others. Otisville has had them.

ROBERT (BOB) RUSSELL

Robert (Bob) Russell lived to the age of eighty plus. He was the village drayman for the greater part of his life, and a most excellent one he was. He said many times, "When I die, I want to go with my boots on," and with his boots on he did die. One morning he went out into the woodshed for kindling wood and dropped dead. He was a very important cog in the wheels of business life for many years. He was not a large man, but he must have been a strong man to handle the very heavy boxes and barrels of merchandise as he did. He knew how to load and unload anything. Some of his draying was done with donkeys, but most of it with horses, and one of his fine characteristics was his love for his horses. His greatest horse love was for old "Charlie." It was very common to find him talking kindly to Charlie. He visited with his horses as if he believed they knew all he said to them.

To talk of character, any man who has the will power possessed by Robert is one man in a million. It was exemplified when he pounded the hotel bar one morning with disgust and said to the young man tending bar: "When it comes to the point a young cur like you tells me what I can drink, it has come to the place where I will never take another drink over this bar—or any other bar." All of us who knew Uncle Bob knew he was a steady drinker from his early boyhood up to that day. Not another drop of strong drink ever passed his lips. Again I say there is not one man in a million like him. I never knew him to be noticeably drunk. He was always on duty as a drayman. I never knew him to damage anything he handled. He was always faithful, always pleasant, and always trustworthy. Robert, your picture with old Charlie is most valuable.

MILTON (MIT) ECKLER

Milton Eckler (nickname Mit) was a natural born actor. It was too bad he lived before Hollywood was founded. He would have been a real star. Every day, either on the street, or on first base in a ball game, or on the stage when our local talent was putting on some drama, he could be found. He loved to give pennies to children, and he enjoyed working up bets on a race or a game. Drunk or sober he was never quarrelsome, but was a character no one could dislike, and his best friends were the little children he gave the pennies to.

He had some musical talent, as was shown one time when he came to band practice with a piccolo. He had, unbeknown to anyone in the band, obtained the instrument, learned to finger it and read some music. At that time the band had rehearsals twice a week. Perhaps that was too much for Mit. Whatever the reason, he soon quit the band.

He played first base for the town ball team several years and the writer, a lad at the time, could not keep his eyes off Mit. He was always on the move with energy overflowing. At bat, he was the same.

He was always betting, but never put up much money and liked to get up a bet even between others. An example of this happened after a ball game between Otisville and a Flint club. With C. D. Doane pitching and John Hughes catching for Otisville, Flint could do nothing with Doane's fast ball.

After the game, when the teams had come up town, Mit, who had watched the game, looked, as usual, for a chance to stir up a bet. The writer doesn't know just how it started, but he did see Mit collect \$10 to cover the same amount which the Flint crowd had collected. Flint had a fast runner and Mit had sent for Charles Misner, who could really steal second base. The starting line was marked, the cord at the finish line was drawn and "bang!" They were off, but they never reached the finish line, for Misner soon pulled away from the Flint man. Mit chuckled and said: "Well, boys! I knew they had nothing that could beat Misner." You see, he had watched them run in the ball game.

Well, Mit, you used to get drunk sometimes when you were living in your small home back of your brother Nelson's home. Your sister-in-law has many times taken you by the arm, led you to your home, and seen that you got to bed to sleep off the drunk (I have, without license, used drunk as a noun.)

Mit was honest, peace-loving, kind to children—friendly to all. His drink habit was peculiar. In the prohibition era he bought extracts for his drinks. How he lived through it is a mystery. Well, Mit, (many called you Met), you were a friendly fellow and there are a few still living who miss you.

AUGUSTUS (GUS) HERRICK

During the writer's young manhood Otisville had another male entertainer. Augustus Herrick was not of the dramatic, but of the comic type. He could make folks laugh at anything. His facial expressions had much to do with what he said. I will try to come somewhat near to his own words as I heard him tell an experience he had in the Civil War.

"I wanted to keep away from the rebel bullets as far as possible, so I worked hard to get a kitchen assignment. I succeeded! Hardtack was all the go and soldiers in blue longed for a change. The very first day the chef asked me if I could bake some biscuits. I said, 'Oh, yes!' So I got some water and some flour and went to work. I, perhaps, started with too much water, but kept stirring in more flour till I could put my rolls into balls and baked them. Well, hardtask was hard all right, but those balls were harder, and the next day the chef fired me, so I had to shoulder a gun. But I always used my head, and usually kept out of the vanguard. There was once I found myself acting as captain and leading the troops. That happened to be in retreat. Now that the war is over and I am back home I wonder what might have happened if they had tasted those rolls and found they were made with nothing but water and flour! Would I have come home alive? I did learn from some of my buddies that there was no loss to the government, because while my biscuits could not be eaten, they made cheap cannon fodder!"

Gus would tell his yarns with the driest face until others would laugh, then join them in the laugh. His stories might be told by you or me, but they would not be funny. There was something in his eyes and facial features that always brought a laugh.

Poor Gus! I was in Mosure's drug store one day to get an ice cream soda. Before Dalton waited on me he told me how some of the village boys had the habit of coming in when he and his clerk were busy and helping themselves. It so happened that a few days before, an order for drugs had come in and in the order was a new drug—a quick cathartic. Dalton knew the flavoring the boys always used, so he fixed a dose for them with the new drug. That ended the trouble! He had just finished telling me how he had tricked the boys, when in came Gus. I asked him if he would have a soda with me. He said he would be glad to have one on me. I winked at Dalton. The next day I met Gus on the street and he said: "Say, Laing! It's a long road that has no end. I will see that you get a short one!" Then he laughed and told me that he did not reach home before trouble started. I was so ashamed of myself I couldn't laugh with him.

MRS. MARY (FULLER) LANSFIELD

Let's leave the male characters for a moment and turn to a lovely, capable lady character whose maiden name was Mary Fuller. Her father was blind and for many years her mother kept boarders.

When the Pere Marquette Railway ran a branch through Otisville in 1872, they brought a section boss from Holly, Michigan, to be the local boss. He was a good one—sober, industrious and thrifty. He must have been an Irishman, for his name was Patrick Lansfield. He became a boarder at Mrs. Fuller's. He had almost no education, but he had something pleasing in his make-up. Probably his industrious, thrifty habits had much to do with it, for it was not very long before Mary Fuller fell in love with him. Eventually they were married—and a happy marriage it turned out to be.

Patrick, in this short tale, will be Pat, for that was what everyone called him. Pat must have laid up some money and perhaps Mary had also, for they soon had a store built with living quarters above and in the rear. While Pat was working on the railroad, Mary was running a millinery business. It soon became prosperous enough to need hired help. This store was used by them only a few years, when it was traded to Dr. J. B. Laing for a 40-acre farm.

A larger store was built on the south side of Main Street with a large G.A.R. Hall on the second floor. The new store was managed by Mrs. Lan, as she was frequently called. Mrs. Lan was very popular and the store prospered. In 1903, it, together with three other business places, burned. Stringer and Osband's big store on the corner was one of the three. They decided not to rebuild. Osband went to Flint and opened a grocery store. Stringer, after staying about a year to sell the interests of the firm and his personal interests, went to Detroit where he and his son, Clyde, went into the business of manufacturing door plates.

The Lansfields were undaunted by the fire and soon were building the white brick store on the corner for rental purposes, and two red bricks, one for their own store, and the other for rent. Clark Seeley also decided to rebuild, so he built a barber shop with living quarters above. Seeley and Lansfields split the cost of a division wall. This wall was the west wall of the Lansfield store and the east wall of the Seeley building. So there were five store buildings on Main Street in Otisville built by Mr. and Mrs. Lansfield. Three of these buildings had living quarters on the second floor. The white brick store, as built, had a large storage room on the second floor with no stairway, but with a hand-worked elevator. The G.A.R. hall on the floor above the store that burned (as has already been described) was now a thing of the past.

There was another store building built on Main Street, which I am led to believe Pat and Mary Lansfield had something to do with. To the west of the American House property (later the Branch House) stood a residence owned by Asher Look. In the late part of the 19th Century this residence was purchased by



MR. AND MRS. PATRICK LANSFIELD

Sylvester (Ves) Fuller. The house was moved north to Pine Street onto property joining the Lansfield home, and a one-story brick store was built where the house had stood.

Mrs. Lansfield was the sole manager of all the Lansfield stores. She lived Otisville, dreamed Otisville, loved its people, its school, churches and lakes, even its cemetery. A long, long dream that did not come true was the damming of the outlet from the lakes, so as to make them into one large lake, just as Lake Orion was built. She dreamed of the lake as being surrounded by cottages to make Otisville a real summer resort.

The many things Mary Lansfield did, the quiet way she did them, and her great love for her home town makes her, in the mind of the writer, one of the great personages in this history. She was born January 16, 1849, and died November 24, 1941, having lived to within one month and 22 days of 93 years.

* * *

G.A.R.

On May 30, 1956, I wrote the following: "In the 1880's and 1890's, while the old G. A. R. Organization was alive, this is how Decoration Day was observed. Every year the old soldiers and the auxiliary met in their Hall and marched to the Methodist Church for their plan of service. After this service, led by the band, they marched to the cemetery where they decorated the soldiers' graves with flags. For years the G. A. R. Veterans bought the flags with their own money. As the years passed their numbers became fewer and fewer. Finally only John Gibbs, Charles Moon and Thomas Derwin were buying the flags. Moon and Gibbs passed on in 1928, leaving only Derwin. I had been elected Township Clerk in 1925 and as clerk was custodian of the cemetery at that time. Mr. Derwin came to me and asked me to purchase the flags. I did so, and helped pay for them. I then told Mr. Derwin not to think of flags again as it should be up to the township to buy them, and that I personally would see that they would be furnished and placed each year as long as I lived. I knew that it was not neglect on the Township Board's part that the old soldiers had bought them. I was clerk of Forest Township for thirty years and for twenty-two of them have looked after flags.

The old presidential campaigns were really something—and the old G. A. R. members would get quite excited. At the time of the Cleveland-Harrison campaign in 1888, the Democrats erected a hickory flagpole in the center of the park symbolizing their respect for Andrew Jackson, known as "Old Hickory" in his day. The G.A.R., not to be outdone, erected a larger pole of pine on Main Street right in front of the stairway leading up to their hall. Under the U. S. Flag at the top of the Democratic hickory pole, there floated a large Cleveland streamer. Under the U. S. Flag on the pine pole floated a large Harrison streamer. While Cleveland received the most popular votes, Harrison received the most electoral votes.

In 1886—that is as near as I can guess the year—a very unusual thing happened in Otisville. At that time, there were somewhere near fifty old Civil War Veterans living in and near Forest Township. They decided to hold a two-day reunion in the village. The night of the first day they had a bivouac (camp fire) in the woods on the northeast part of what is now Quarderer property, and in the afternoon of the second day they had a sham battle. At that time, there were only two houses east of Lake Street in the village. One was the Van Gorden house at the bend of State Road as it turns north, the other was the Lamb house lying north of the lake. All property lying between Lake Street and a line running north along the west line of the Van Gorden property was an open field. In the south part of this field and about twenty feet north of the walk was placed the small village cannon—a relic of some past war, probably the Civil War. This cannon was protecting the Union position from the Confederate attack, which was to come from the woods lying southeast of the Pere Marquette Railroad. Somewhat north of Grove Street Levi Metz, father of Christian Metz, was stationed as an outpost. Those handling the cannon were really young civilians. Clarence Haight and one other young man whose name I have forgotten were hammering in the ramrod. There had been at least a couple of shots fired. One of Ed Crawford's thumbs was covering the powder hole, when bang! the cannon went off of its own accord. Off went Crawford's thumb, and away went the ramrod a long, long ways—landing near soldier Metz. A yell came from him, "Are you trying to shoot ME?" Two men had badly powder-blackened faces and hands—and Clinton Doane hurried home with a heart attack, thinking he was going to die. Those were the casualties of this fierce battle. The Confederates never got out of the woods; the Union Army, apparently, defeated themselves. We are sorry to say, not long after this battle the cannon disappeared. It had been fired every Fourth of July at 4:00 A. M. by Milton (Mit) Eckler to let sleepers know it was Independence Day. Did someone, hating to be awakened so early in the morning, drag the thing down to one of the lakes and sink it? I doubt that anyone now living knows.



The above picture is copied from one held by the writer. It shows the band waiting to lead the G.A.R. Veterans, their Ladies' Auxiliary and their many friends to the cemetery at the close of one of their annual programs held in the old Methodist Church. The picture shows little of the building. It does show the old woodshed where the writer had one of his memorable fights. It is also the place where the larger boys smashed a wasp's nest and released its occupants to put the writer to bed with wasp-stings.

under the ownership of Charles and John, but continued under the name of Parker Hardware Company.

In 1906 the two brothers, Charles and John, opened the Ford Motor Sales in the cement block building on the north side of Main Street, which they had built. In December of 1934, Charles died in a hotel fire in Lansing, while representing his district as Representative in the State Legislature. After the death of Clinton D. Doane, who had been President of Otisville State Bank from its inception until his death, Charles D. Parker was elected to the presidency and continued in that office until his untimely death. The next president of the bank was John Parker, who held that position until 1938, when the bank was reorganized.

In 1913, Charles and W. H. Parker bought the Ed Price Lumber Yard with a small office on the north side of Main Street between the railroad and Woodward Avenue. Before selling the yard sometime around 1922 they built three houses on the west side of Woodward Avenue between what were then the Alvah Smith and Al Neaves residences. After the District No. 5 school moved to the new brick school building in 1920, W. H. Parker bought the abandoned property, wrecked the building and used the material in the construction of three dwellings on the west side of North Street, now the new part of M-15, which is State Street going through Otisville.

W. H. Parker had bought the A. K. Hunton store with office above, which was built in 1875, and the building older people will remember as the Bloomer Store and the Post Office building. The last three properties were all held for rental purposes until they had to be wrecked when the State of Michigan re-routed M-15 through Otisville. Besides building a home on the southwest corner of Main Street and Woodward Avenue, W. H. had purchased the property lying west of his home.

After the frame store with living quarters above burned in 1874, the Parker family moved into what we will call the Lock home west of the Branch Hotel. John Parker was born there, and it was there the family lived until Grant and Alice, his wife, purchased the home on the southwest corner of Main Street and Jefferson Avenue where John now lives.

After C. D.'s death John became sole owner of the Ford Sales until 1932, when he became interested with L. K. Henderson in Chrysler and Plymouth Sales. This partnership continued until 1955.

In 1943, John Parker and Lloyd Warner bought the Otisville Elevator Company. Under their management it has grown until it is twice the size in stock and buildings that it was when they purchased it.

Today John is no longer interested in the hardware business, other than nails, paint, wire fence, stoves and a few other things that naturally go with the building supplies which are handled by the Otisville Elevator Company.

The hardware business has also continued to expand under the firm name of Charles D. Parker Sons. A fine new hardware

store was built on the south side of Main Street about where the Beemer Blacksmith Shop burned in the big fire of 1884. The Charles D. Parker Sons Company has purchased and wrecked the old red brick store that stood next to the Look lot. This property was later known as the Earl Garnsey home on the corner of Main Street and Jefferson and for a number of years was headquarters for the Otisville Telephone Exchange. We are told there will soon be a much-needed addition built onto the Charles D. Parker Sons Hardware Store.

Much credit must be given to Mrs. Ethel Parker, mother of the sons, for the success of the business, and credit should also be given Mr. Lorenz Daenzer, the able assistant.

On December 17, 1929, Lloyd Warner became manager for the J. P. Burroughs Elevator Company. In 1943, the property of the J. P. Burroughs Company was bought by John Parker and Lloyd Warner and was run under the firm name of Otisville Elevator Company with Warner as Manager in Charge.

Touching the south line of the John Parker lot, there was a barn lot abutting the line on the south side in the early 1900's. The barn was quite large. Taking into partnership with him, Grant Parker took a man by the name of Martin. They made large cement tile, mostly for culverts and drains reaching to and from the culverts. For some time a good part of the culverts the county roads were made with tile of the Parker and Martin Company.

Today there is the Appliance Store some two miles south of Mt. Morris, owned by the C. D. Parker Sons Company, and managed by R. G. Parker, the younger of the two sons. The reader will see the family spread out very little, and clung to Otisville to make their money. They were industrious and they succeeded. Let me add that in 1956, as a sort of complement to the Appliance Store, the Parker Philgas Company started on East Carpenter Road as near the store as they could reach the railroad, and now supplies the entire County with bottled gas.



West Main Street as it is today



What we have been calling Village Park was deeded and mapped as Public Square. It has been suggested that the park be renamed Memorial Park, because of the monuments now standing there, erected for veterans of the First and Second World Wars, giving their names, with Gold Stars for those who did not come home.



East Main Street as it is today



The new M-15 took up the greater part of North Street, changing the routing for a short distance. It is shown above at the point where it crosses Main Street.

No picture for South State was possible because two bends in the street would block off the South State Street business places from coming into the picture.

Business Places



MASON TACKLE COMPANY

In 1944, George W. Mason and Frances C. Mason built a factory for manufacturing fishing tackle on the west side of M-15 just outside the north limits of the Village. About five years later an addition was built on the north end. The building is a fine-looking one-story structure with a beautiful, wide, well-kept lawn and well-selected shrubbery.

The factory has been successful from the start, thanks, partly, to good management. The present manager is Bruce D. Gee. The employees number from twenty to twenty-five. Just now the number is twenty-three. Its output goes practically all over the world and as a result Otisville has become widely advertised.



OTISVILLE HOTEL

You have already read about the American House, Otisville's first hotel.

The Branch House, an enlargement of the American House, and the fire of 1886 which burned it, and the rebuilding with bricks, and its occupation by different managers.

The brick hotel is now owned by Felix Bober. He bought it in 1948. His health has not been too good for some time, and I believe the management rests largely on Mrs. Bober. However, according to many of the good citizens of Otisville, the business has been unusually well conducted since it was purchased by Mr. Bober. The writer talked with Mrs. Bober and she kindly me the date of the purchase and the answers to all of the questions I asked. Following are her answers:

We sell liquor, beer and wine by the glass, beer and wine to take out, rent rooms to transients. No meals are served. We do sell some snacks. She did not tell me in so many words, but others have told me that they, Mr. and Mrs. Bober, enjoyed aiding others.



OTISVILLE DAIRY BAR

In 1947, Laurence Bourcier, familiarly called "Bushy," bought the Dairy Bar, which was located on the west side of M-15 near the south limits of the Village, and soon began selling McDonald Dairy Products. The firm name was the Otisville Dairy. The business grew until, in the 1950's, it had nine milk routes, taking in Otisville, Columbiaville, Millington, Otter Lake, Russellville and Richfield Center. In fact, it took in nearly all of Richfield Township—a square of approximately twenty miles north and south, and twenty miles east and west. The routes deliver all the McDonald Dairy Products. The salesroom at the front of the Dairy handled, in addition to a complete line of dairy products, everything one would expect to find in an up-to-date dairy bar, including lunches. There were also several tables, and stools for customers at the counter.

* * *

In 1944, Lionell Dittmar bought the John Beagle property from Mrs. Myrtle Laing, a daughter of John Beagle and built a dairy and another smaller structure on the property adjoining the house. Mrs. Dittmar operated a gift shop in the smaller building and Mr. Dittmar, a Dairy Bar in the other. Not long afterward the Dittmars moved away from Otisville.

* * *

In 1915 a creamery was built on South Jefferson Avenue, with Ralph Hayes as owner and manager. It prospered and to this day is a success. The firm name was Springbrook Creamery. In 1923, Hayes sold the creamery to Charles D. Parker. In 1940 it became the property of the Parker Management Company. In 1947 it was sold to John A. Baker and wife, Ruth H. Baker. On the death of Mr. Baker, Mrs. Baker became the sole owner and manager. On September 5, 1956, Russell and Florence Underwood became the new owners and managers.

In 1909 several of the Otisville business men, together with farmers in the community surrounding the Village, invested \$100 each in stock and built a fine creamery on the west side of North Street just south of the Pere Marquette Depot. The best of modern equipment was purchased. A butter-maker and a cream collector were hired, and business began. At the end of the first year no dividends were distributed, but the Village businessmen considered it a successful first year, since new tools and other necessities had been bought. Some of the farmers thought they should have received dividends. They did not take into account the fact that it had really paid them a good dividend in that their cream was collected at their door.

The second year, started with some discontent among a few farmers, so, when a cream station was opened in Columbia-ville offering one-half cent more for cream delivered at the station by the farmers themselves, some of the stockholders went back on their own company. When the third year came and there were still no dividends, more of the farmer-stockholders demurred, and began selling their stock. One of them came to the writer and offered his stock certificate for \$25. I tried to persuade him to hold onto his stock, but the result was that he went up the street and sold it for \$26.

A short time after this incident the purchaser sold his interest in the store of which he was a partner and moved to Canada. The evening before he was to take the train he came to me with the certificate, for which he had paid \$26, and his own certificate, and asked me to buy both of them at the price of twenty-five cents on the dollar. Not long after that the creamery was sold for better than forty-eight cents on the dollar.

As far as I can learn, I am the only stockholder living now. Most of what is written concerning the creamery is from memory, since all the creamery's records were destroyed. The Genesee County Register of Deeds Office would give me dates so far as the real estate was concerned, but those dates would not be of interest to the readers. I can only add that in the latter part of 1914 or the early part of 1915 the creamery burned.

* * *

Around 1945, K. Albert Hoffman built a restaurant on the east side of M-15 just south of the Park, serving all kinds of quick lunches, ice cream, candy, tobacco, etc. The firm name was Doc's Drive-In, a very popular place with the High School students.

* * *

In 1952, Joe Maschino sold his implement business to Wilbur List, who took Edward Simmonds into partnership under the firm name of List and Simmonds Sales and Service, and specialized in the sale of International Farm Implements and giving the finest service possible.



YALE ELECTRIC

In 1945, Randall E. Yale built an Electric Appliance Shop under the firm name of Yale Electric, on the west side of M-15 in the Village just opposite the Park. The business handled and serviced electrical appliances.



MCCORMICK PONTIAC SALES

In 1943, Max McCormick built his public garage and Pontiac Sales on the east side of North Street and south of the Town Hall, now the Fire Department for the Village and Township. His Pontiac Sales has been successful from the start and now in 1956 only Pontiac cars have a Sales and Service agency in Otisville.



HENDERSON GARAGE



LAWRENCE HENDERSON HOME



FORD BIRTLES HOME

In 1921, Christian Metz bought the Patten Building from E. S. Swayze, wrecked it and in 1922 built a modern public garage which he himself operated for a time, and which he later rented for a time. In 1935 he sold the business to L. K. Henderson. Henderson is now starting his twenty-second year as owner and manager. In 1937 he joined John Parker in a sales partnership selling Chrysler and Plymouth automobiles and Dodge trucks. This sales arrangement was a good one, for it combined use of the Henderson Garage with the larger Parker Sales and Storage Building. This partnership continued till 1955 when, because of Mr. Parkers ill health, the partnership was dissolved, leaving the Pontiac Sales as the only car sales in town.

Very soon after Mr. Henderson took over the ownership of the garage, he added a wrecking service and has continued to improve the business until, today he can say, "There is none better." It is open to call day or night. In 1942, Henderson took into the servicing department a young man by the name of Ford Birtles. He proved to be an "A-1" helper—in fact, he proved to be so good that he was taken in as a long-time employee, and later as a son-in-law. Now, the management of service is in his hands, and more and more of the general management has come upon his capable shoulders.



OTISVILLE COMMUNITY CENTER

Otisville Community Center

In 1944, a group of civic-minded citizens of the Village and Township, led by Dr. E. C. Mosier, formed a corporation to build a community hall.

Several of those most interested got behind the wheel with the doctor and pushed. One of them was a teacher, Albert Hoffman. The corporation charter was obtained and officers were elected as follows: President Dr. E. C. Mosier, Vice-President Albert Hoffman, Secretary Gwendolyn Pfohl, and Treasurer Lawrence Henderson. Leslie Barden, Lloyd Warner, Paul A. Laing, John Parker, Lorenz Daenzer, K. C. Barkley, Fred Barden, and A. W. Winchell (Flint) made up the rest of the Board.

By this time, the Otisville High School building was so overcrowded that the Otisville Community Center Board voted to build so the needs of our school could be somewhat relieved. The result was that a fine, large building was built. The name Otisville Community Center was plainly placed on the front of the building.

There was an entrance at the front with a kitchen at the left as you went in. At the right was a hat and coat room, from which a stairway led up to a room which served as the office and movie projector room. On leaving the entrance hall you stepped into the large main hall where all large gatherings were held. At the south end was a stage. The entrance to the stage was from a smaller room at the right or west side and at the back. At the left or east side was the boiler room.

About 1947, to conserve heat, the most beautiful ceiling your writer ever saw was built over the large hall. Toilet facilities and showers for the athletes rounded out the floor plan of the first Otisville Community Center. The showers were located in a small basement at the back which was entered from the small room on the west side.

Near midnight of January 8, 1951, the Village fire siren sounded. It really sounded and Otisville citizens were shocked. Turn to the chapter on Fires for the story. As I stood watching the fire one of the stockholders stepped up to me and said: "Well, now we will have to start all over again." And start they did! The Village Council granted to the stockholders a portion of the alley back of the burned building site large enough to accommodate a heating plant and a large kitchen. On Lot 11 and east of the original foundation a much larger stage was built. As the building now stands, there is a larger basketball court, improved toilet facilities and, on the whole, a much better building. Even though Otisville was proud of the building that burned, it is still prouder of the new one.

It was fortunate that Winchell, a graduate of Otisville High School and a member of the board, was interested, since through his position with the Smith Bridgman Company, Flint, he had access to loans from the company that were very useful to the Board. Following are the names of the Community Center Board for 1956:

Lorenz Daenzer, President; Leslie Barden, Vice-President; Richard Shade, Secretary; Beulah Kenney, Treasurer; Howard Millington, Lloyd Waner, LaVerne Paquette, Sally Roberson, Robert Simpkin, Ila Forsyth and Lyle Badgley.



CECIL W. PHIPPS MARKET IN OTISVILLE
AT TURN OF CENTURY



CECIL W. PHIPPS HOME IN OTISVILLE (1956)

In September, 1900, Cecil W. Phipps bought the Sylvenus (Vene) Nichols meat market business located in what was called by the Genesee County History the "Crawford Block." Why it was so called, I cannot learn. It was wrecked by the Charles D. Parker Sons in 1953 to make room for an addition to their hardware business. Mr. Phipps added groceries, boots and shoes. In 1908, "C. W." sold the fresh meat business to Fred Gilson and moved the grocery and shoe stock into the central part of the Lansfield Block, adding drygoods. Here he continued in the general store business, but discontinued the sale of fresh meats.

The building, probably built by Thomas Branch Sr., with the help of his sons, Thomas Jr., and Frank, with some minor help of a younger son, John. A basement was used for a saloon and a jail. In front on the first floor was a meat market. Back of the market and on the second floor were living quarters. Above picture was taken from a picture furnished by C. D. Phipps' son Hilton. It shows the building as occupied for eight years by C. W. Phipps beginning in 1900. In 1908 C. W. moved to where the 5-10c to \$5.00 store is today.

JOHN EAGLE BLACKSMITH SHOP

In 1899 Elmer McInally came to Otisville from North Branch, rented and operated the John Eagle Blacksmith Shop. From that time until 1948, with the exception of a few months at Davison, he furnished Otisville with service seldom equalled by those of his profession. In 1912, he built a two-story Blacksmith Shop just north of the home he had purchased on the northeast corner where Grove Street meets the present M-15 in Otisville. He had served as Master of Otisville Lodge No. 401, F. & A. M., and also as Patron of Nourmahal Chapter 282, O.E.S. On September 24, 1942, death ended a long, useful career. His death occurred a year before he would have received a life membership card from Eagle Lodge 320, I.O.O.F., where he had served as Noble Grand. The shop has since been used for various purposes, including a welding shop. Now the Lakeville Newspaper is being printed there (1957).



ROSE MARIE COFFEE SHOP

Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Quaderer, who were both born in Switzerland, but are naturalized American citizens, moved from Royal Oak to Otisville, on June 2, 1932, after having purchased the property at the easterly end of Main Street.

In 1940 they built the Rose Marie Coffee Shop under the management of their daughter, Rose Marie. Also they built a gas station between their home and the Coffee Shop. The gas station was placed under the management of Woodrow Wade. In 1944, Mr. and Mrs. Smith Roberson became the managers of the Coffee Shop, and at this date, December 16, 1956, the Robersons continue to be the successful Restaurateurs.

In 1955 Ed Blue became the gas station manager.



OTISVILLE SHOE AND VARIETY STORE

In 1946 Delmar D. Lawrence built a modern Shoe Repair Shop behind his residence on State Street in Otisville. In 1949 he and Frank July built a double store building on the Lawrence property north of the Lawrence residence. The south part was owned by Lawrence and the north part by July. As soon as the building was completed, Lawrence moved his shoe repair business into the back part of his side of the building and stocked the front part with drygoods. July filled his part with miscellaneous articles usually found in novelty or dime stores (5c to \$1.00). Lawrence used the former shoe repair building in the rear as a warehouse. In 1953, Mr. July sold his stock of merchandise to Lawrence and rented his part of the building to Lawrence, who took an option to buy. As soon as an opening had been made between the two parts, Lawrence stocked the rented part with more drygoods and dime store items. In 1953, Lawrence's son, Jack, became a partner in the business. Game and sporting goods were added to the stock and Jack went on the road selling wholesale game and sporting goods.

In 1946, E. J. Upper, who for years had been a successful contractor and builder, decided to build a modern frozen food building. He immediately went to work to build a large up-to-the-minute structure, with four hundred fifty individual lockers, a room for cleaning and dressing, one for curing, another for rendering lard, a general workroom and office and a grocery department. This structure was built on the west side of M-15 a small distance north of the Mason Fishing Tackle Plant and was quite accessible for the villagers.

Until 1955, Mr. and Mrs. Upper gave the best kind of service. Then, Mrs. Upper's health failed somewhat, and I believe Mr. Upper began to see that he could no longer keep up the rapid pace he had formerly maintained from his youth. The business was sold, but ownership of the building was kept by the Uppers.



LINDSAY ELECTRIC PLUMBING AND HEATING

In May, 1955, Cecil Lindsay bought the plumbing and heating business of William Barden. It was then located at 133 Main St. Before above picture was taken Mr. Lindsay had purchased the Upper Frozen Food Lockers plant and moved his business into it, pictured above. The firm name is Lindsay Plumbing and Heating. This is a fine, roomy building for this particular business.



OTISVILLE STATE BANK

In about 1905, a small private bank was opened in the Lansfield Block. William Lyons was probably the instigator of it. He soon came on, and by 1907 was successful in organizing the Otisville State Bank with himself as Cashier. On March 26, 1907, a charter was received with the following officers elected as directors: C. D. Doane, President; Charles D. Parker, Clerk; Charles Moon, James W. Averill, George Coon.

On November 22, 1907, the south sixty feet of Lot 3, Rogers Addition, was purchased from Ronald J. Laing and wife, Elsie, and the present bank building was built in 1908. In 1922 Clinton D. Doane died and Charles D. Parker became president. Meanwhile, Arthur Prosser had come to Otisville and moved into what is now known as the Joseph Carter home. He had not lived there long before Mrs. Prosser died, and he bought and remodeled what is now (1956) the Lloyd Gilson home.

Mr. Prosser became filled with the idea that Otisville property, Flint property and some new Windsor, Ontario, property, would soon grow in value and he could sell some of his holdings to pay off the bank for moneys he had embezzled. In July, 1925, those borrowings were discovered, and the Otisville State Bank found its loss to amount to at least \$60,000.

Mr. Prosser was arrested and served his time at Jackson State Prison. After his arrest he gave his time, knowledge and energy, together with all his property, to the bank to ease the amount of the loss and aid in a reorganization. Charles D. Parker continued to be president until the time of his death on December 11, 1934. John Parker succeeded him as President.

In 1938, Fred Barden became President and held that position

until 1947. Also, in 1938, Dwight Arthur came to Otisville as Cashier and Vice-President of the bank. He was elected President in 1947.

In 1935, Virginia Crawford McCormick started to work in the bank. She was elected as a member of the Board of Directors and as Cashier in 1947. In 1954 she was elected Executive Vice-President of the Board, retaining her position as Cashier. In 1954, Frank Burgess was elected President of the Board.

By the end of 1956, the assets of the bank had reached very close to two million dollars.

(The material for what has been written of the bank history from 1935 to the present was given by the present capable Cashier, Mrs. Virginia McCormick. She also provided me with the date on which the bank was chartered. The present Board of Directors are: A. B. Crawford, L. F. Bird, R. O. Flett, M. D. Frank Burgess and Virginia McCormick.



ROOT REALTY COMPANY

Home of Mr. and Mrs. Merritt Root and office of Root Realty Company. They have a branch office at 2506 Davison Road, in Flint, operated by William A. Root.



ADA'S TAVERN

In 1932 Ada Shindorf opened a restaurant in what we will call the Clark Seeley Building and in 1933 she was granted a beer license. In 1935, the business was moved into a new building built by Edgar McComb just back of the corner grocery—now Derr's Food Center. The sign read "Ada's Tavern." In 1944, she and her husband, Jerry, purchased the middle part of the Lansfield Block, and the ground floor was remodeled into a modern beer parlor furnishing light lunches, beer and wine. In December, 1956, Ada Shindorf became sole owner of both the building and the business.



OTISVILLE SEPTIC TANK COMPANY

The southernmost business place in Otisville is the Otisville Septic Tank Plant under management of Lester Monroe and Sons. It is a busy place since the territory they cover includes not only Otisville and vicinity, but extends as far as fifty miles away. Their product and service must be good to draw from such a wide area.

Otisville Gasoline Stations

In 1924 L. F. Bird, known as Frank Bird, sold his hardware business in Millington and moved to Otisville with his family. He built what was then called a fine gas station at the bend where M-15 turned easterly and inside the Village and sold standard Oil Products. For some time he bought his gas by the carload (train car), having laid a pipeline from the railroad to the huge tank at his station, but somehow, the railroad end of his pipeline was destroyed and he never mended it. An entire train-load of gasoline was lost. In 1945 he sold the station to Theodore Beckwith. In 1947 Beckwith's brother, Stephen, came to help him and soon a washing and oiling addition was built on the south side of the station. In 1953 Mr. Beckwith sold the station to Imlay City Oil Company and it is now still held by them, although it is unoccupied at this time.

In 1920, the Davison Oil and Gas Company, in which many Otisville and Forest Township citizens owned stock, bought the property on the east side of the Masonic Temple and put in an oil and gas station with Edgar L. Stimson as manager. In about 1925 Earl Garnsey became manager. In 1936 Cornelius D. Doane followed Garnsey and held the business until his death in 1951. Soon after Doane's death the business, which had been continued by his widow and her two sons, was discontinued and the store building and adjoining dwelling were bought by A. B. Crawford and extensively remodeled. It was rented by him to the United States Postal Service and served as the Otisville Post Office through 1956.

The Quaderer Gas Station has been mentioned previously. At about the same time that L. F. Bird opened his gas station, Frank Prosser built a small station at the bend of M-15 in Otisville where the route at that time turned north from Wilson Road.

The new Gulf Station was opened October 1, 1954, under the management of Raymond Jennings and Ronald Seeley, with the heading of "Ray and Ron's Gulf Service—Our Motto! Our Best Service Brings the Customer Back." The station is owned by the Imlay City Oil and Gas Company and Amalgamated with the Imlay City, Mayville and Millington Oil and Gas Companies. The Otisville and Gas interests of Theodore Beckwith were purchased by the new company, Mr. Beckwith being named manager of the Millington branch.

On May 28, 1955, the station built by J. H. Barden was opened under the management of Ralph and Clare Gooch, with the heading "Gooch's Service." The Speedway Company claims for their gas that it excels all others in octane rating. The present octane ratio seems to prove their point.

In 1955, Donald Blue built the third gas station on the west side of M-15 within the Village. It was built on the property Mr. Blue had purchased from the Ezra Paul Post of the American Legion. It lies on the southwest corner where Mill Street meets M-15. It is a good-sized station dealing in Cities Service Products and is managed by Andy Torr. It stands on ground where George Hunton, in the 1870's, built a large barn with a flowing well. The barn sheltered a herd of registered Jersey cows, together with a young Jersey sire which Mr. Hunton purchased in Canada for \$10,000 (a great deal of money for that day.)



**SERVICE STATION BUILT IN 1940
BY RUDOLPH QUADERER**

Rudolph Quaderer built the station now occupied by the Sunoco Company in 1940. It was first leased to the Gulf Company, who placed it under the management of Woodrow Wade. In 1954, after the Michigan Highway Department had taken over North Street, making most of it a part of M-15, the Mayville Oil and Gas Company wrecked the Wade Hall and the old Branch Livery Barn. They built the station now occupied (1956) by the Imlay City Oil & Gas Co., who sell Gulf Products. Edmund Blue took over the Quaderer Station and changed the products to those of the Sunoco Company. Mr. Blue is giving a good quality of service and his location takes care of the businesses from the east and turning north to enter M-15. The station's proximity to the Rose Marie Coffee Shoppe, where home made pies which



QUADERER HOME

are seldom equalled in any other restaurant in the U. S. A. are a part of the menu, is another advantage, since cars can be serviced while the customer eats.

In 1947, that part of East Otisville was replatted which was lying east of State Road (now Center St.). Some land was added north of East Street and replacing all of East Otisville's original plat lying east of Center Street.

In 1949, the Quaderers sold to the Village of Otisville a piece of land lying south of East Street for the Water Works.

In 1950, they sold to Genesee County a piece of land lying north of East Street for the County Road Commission to build a garage for the County's Northeast Quarter. Vernon Rock now manages it.

Otisville Barbers

There have been so many barbers in Otisville, some good ones, some not so good, so the writer will tell only of a few.

The first one I can remember was a colored man whose name was lamb. I was about five years of age, not in school yet, when he cut my hair. The barber shop was on the north side of Main Street, where the three buildings wrecked by William Parker stood. A. K. Hunton had built his home and I ran across the street to see Aunt Mary. I had not been there long when Auntie spoke up and asked me why I was scratching my head so much. She got a fine-toothed comb and discovered that I had picked up a louse while having the haircut.

Charles Yax held forth and did good work where William Banyas now does business. That was in the 1890's. He once decided to learn to ride a bicycle, so he got on one and started west out of town. He did quite well, until he reached the old sink hole. There he lost his nerve. The result was that he crawled out of the hole covered with water and mire. He decided right then to give up bicycling, I believe. Soon afterward he moved to Flint.

In the early 1900's, the Ladies Aid bought the building which Yax had occupied and used it until 1920. Ernest Fenner was there quite a while, and then the American Legion used it for their hall for a short time.

In 1951 William Banyas took over. In 1956, he added another chair and was fortunate enough to find a good barber, Robert Kranz, to use it. A couple of years ago a young son of Mr. and Mrs. Banyas was the victim of the first case of acute polio Otis-



BANYAS BARBER SHOP AND AMERICAN LEGION

(American Legion Story on Page 29)

ville has had. He went through a terrible experience, but thanks to the wonderful care by his parents and the wonderful ability of doctors who treated him, he is now able to romp with his play-mates.

In the late 1800's Clark Seeley began operating a barber shop in a frame building with living quarters behind and above, that stood on the south side of the street across from the Yax shop. In 1903 the building burned in the big fire. The Lansfields and Seeleys rebuilt immediately. For a few years he stayed in the new shop, but finally he sold the business to James Chittle.



FOSS BARBER SHOP

In 1921 William Foss came to Otisville and took over a chair in the Charles Forsyth Shop on Main Street, east of where Foss is now located. In 1925 he moved to his present location, where he has been for the past 31 years, the longest time any Otisville barber has held his job in one stand.

Charles Forsyth has already been mentioned as a barber in whose shop William Foss started. He had helped Bert Uptegraff before going into the army and serving first on the Mexican border, then going overseas to help win World War I. For several years after the war he operated a shop on the first floor of the Hunton Block where Main Street crosses M-15. He did a successful business there, but finally took up writing life and accident insurance. He became so interested and successful in this new work that he gave up barbering and today is very active in selling insurance.

Otisville 'Gold'

Within the perimeter of Otisville there is a perfect square mile of land and water. How many of us now living within this perimeter have ever stopped to think of the gravel and sand that has been taken from it, and will continue to be taken from it for some time to come. It has helped to furnish a livelihood for many laborers. It has helped to furnish sand to use in plastering our walls and in the making of cement blocks and large tiles. For years it was the source of supply in building our streets. It was much more easily mined than California gold, but its worth has become a real gold mine.

In the telephone directory we find listed the Otisville Stone Company. It is operated within the confines of Otisville under the management of J. H. Barden. When the writer called him by telephone and talked with him about the gold mine, he remarked "Yes, it has been, but it is not like the trees. They can be replaced by new growth, but when this is gone it is gone." That is true, but it is true also of the gold mines. (There should be more planting of timber trees. Less over-production of farm crops and more growth of trees will bring our country more wealth.)

Otisville Town Hall

In 1950 the Township entered into a contract with the Niles Steel Tank Company to build a one-thousand-gallon tanker to be placed on a 1951 Ford Truck, and carrying 300 feet of 1½-inch hose. It was supposed to be housed in the Otisville Fire Hall for use of both the Township and the Village.

When delivered, it was found to be too wide to go through the Fire Hall door. On November 14, 1951, Supervisor H. P. Williams and Clerk Laing were instructed to sell the Town Hall to the Village of Otisville. They were to make it over into what is today, a Fire Hall, a place for elections and Board meetings and all other business which may be useful to both Township and Village.

ROSTER OF FIRE COMPANY IN 1956

Members of the combined Otisville and Forest Township Fire Company in 1956 are listed below:

Chief: Delmar Griswold
Assistant Chief: Lorenz Daenzer
Secretary-Treasurer: Carl Glanton
Jay Barden
Erwin Sutherby
Del Lawrence
Ford Birtles
William Barden
Robert Crawford
Lewis Bird
Raymond Jennings
William Banyas
Auxiliary men:
Duane Gray
Lyle Badgley
Alton Lindsay

Postal Service

Previous to 1885, Amos Begel, Ira Begel and Lymon Crowl, all three of whom were active instruments in the founding of the settlement of Otisville, had endeavored to get some Postal Service for the settlement and Forest Township as a whole, but their labor had been of no effect. Finally, through the influence of ex-Governor Fenton, E. S. Williams and Russell Bishop of Flint an office was created with John Crawford as Postmaster. This man was not the John Crawford many of you remember, but the father of David Crawford, whose widow, 92 years of age, now lives in Otisville. You will all know the location when I say it was where David Crawford grew up, married, and with the help of his wife, Sarah, ministered unto our first postmaster in his declining years. The present owner of the farm is Benjamin Sabo.

In 1859 the office was moved to Otisville (then unincorporated), but still with the name Forest Post Office. John Crawford was still the lawful Postmaster—and R. D. Shaw, the deputy. Shaw was later named Postmaster. In about 1861, the name of the office was changed to Otisville Post Office. Shaw was followed by Postmasters Ira Saunders, George Reed, E. S. Swayze, Asher Look and J. W. Nicholson.

Previous to 1872 there was no railroad carrier, not even a stagecoach carrier such as Flushing had. The United States Government had laid out a postal route running from Pine Run to Lapeer. It passed through Otisville, and a man by the name of Luther Scott would pick up the Pine Run and Otisville mail with a horse and buggy once a week. He would carry it to Lapeer, pick up incoming Otisville and Pine Run mail and deliver it to its destination.

In 1872, the Flint & Pere Marquette Railroad System built a branch line from the Flint junction. It passed through Otisville to Otter Lake, and later to Fostoria. The railroad gave us two mail deliveries each day. One from Otter Lake reached us at 9:00 A.M., and one from Flint reached us at 5:00 P. M.

After a very few years had passed the P.M.R.R. found its branch loads getting too heavy for two trains a day, so it put on four trains a day for some time. When the loads eased up enough to warrant it, the system changed back to two trains again.

However, a new industry had been born. Automobiles were being made and postal service to the farmers had put their mail at their doors. Two mail routes went out from Otisville, one east route, numbered Route 1, and one west, numbered Route 2. With a little political help, Robert Misner took over the east route and Ernest Judson, the west. Those were still horse-and-buggy days. Misner soon made up his mind to go into the Buick factory and resigned his post. John Forsyth passed the examination and took over Route 1.

It soon became apparent that the day of horse-and-buggy mail delivery was obsolete, so, for the most part, Ford cars took their place. The car was faster than the horse, and an entire rerouting was mapped. Judson and Forsyth had both served the time necessary to make them pensioners. The new mapping gave David B. Glazier the one route out of Otisville to cover.

Parcel Post made a big change in our postal service, and it grew and grew until our present Post Office handles the mass of mail coming in with difficulty.

Postmaster Robert Crawford has asked for a complete list of all the postmasters who have served here. The writer has done his best to comply and I believe, when the list shall be read, that it will be complete and arranged in the order of their serving. The list through Nicholson's tenure of office has already been given. Nicholson sold his drug business to John Russell, who took over the Post Office business along with the drug stock. Mary Lansfield followed Russell, and then followed:

1. Robert Alexander
2. Frank Branch
3. E. H. Alexander
4. John M. McCormick
5. Ed Price
6. E. H. Alexander (formerly acting, only)
7. Ray Forsyth
8. Thomas Williams (Acting)
9. Weston Averill
10. Gladys Averill Jennings (Acting)
11. Frank Helmka (Acting)
12. Catherine Laing
13. Everett Warner
14. Evelyn Wearne (Acting)
15. Robert Crawford

Otisville is not a large place in the eyes of the world, but in many respects it is a large place in the minds of many of us. We call it the best place in the world, and we hope, in the not-too-distant future, to have a more commodious Post Office. (Dated December 31, 1956).

Village Officers—1956

President, Lorenz Daenzer.

Clerk: George Robinson.

Treasurer: Catherine Laing.

Trustee, Paul A. Laing.

Trustee, Edwin Norton.

Trustee, William Banyas.

Trustee, Theodore McComb.

Trustee: Kenneth Swart.

Trustee: Ralph Smith.

Assessor, Edgar McComb.

Supt. Public Works, Delmar Griswold.

Police, Leland Norton.

Appendix

The History of Otisville was supposed to cover the period up to December 31, 1956. At that time a rumor was prevalent that we were to have a new Post Office, but the rumor did not interest the writer particularly. Then, something happened that did interest not only the writer, but everybody in Forest Township.

POST OFFICE

Our present Postmaster had quietly laid plans for the new Post Office. He had interested Donald Wetherwax in the plan—and what a result they produced! As the building of the new Post Office grew and grew, the interest of all the local people grew and grew. Today, the project has been completed, and the entire community is praising Bob and Don and thanking them for building such a beautiful postal home that will provide ample room for our postal service through the remainder of this century and well into the next.

NEWSPAPER

Now that we have an appendix, the writer is glad to add that in March, 1957, a Mr. A. B. Green opened an up-to-date printing business in the McNally Building. The equipment provides for nearly all kinds of printing. The work done has been very satisfactory.

Mr. Green had commenced the publication of a weekly newspaper called The Lakeville Community News, a name taken from that of the new school consolidation. Lakeville High School is the result of the consolidation of twenty-one school districts into one district for the purpose of building the fine, modern High School now enjoyed by Otisville, Columbiaville, Otter Lake and their surrounding territory. Lakeville is appropriately named, because it is surrounded by so many lakes to the north, south, east and west!

Otisville's New Post Office



OTISVILLE POST OFFICE
(Built in 1957)



HOME OF ROBERT W. CRAWFORD, POSTMASTER (1956)

Preface to Supplement

The following is not history. It is a semi-biography. If you take time to read it, you will see how old age affects grandpas.

Supplement

I have written the history of Otisville. Now, pardon me for wishing to name two ladies who were far above the ordinary, in my estimation. One of them was Nellie (her true given name). The other was, and still is, Edna, one of my six granddaughters.

I will commence with Nellie. More than two years ago, as I was thinking intently of her many virtues, I picked up a pencil and tablet and in a very short time I had written the only poetic verse I have ever written. This is it.

NELLIE

She never sought for fleeting fame;
She never sought an illustrious name;
It was her home that she loved best;
It was OUR home she loved to nest.
She sought not office—sought not wealth;
She did seek her children's health.
Then, when at last on her hospital bed
She looked into my face and said
"I love you, dear!" those words her last.
Oh! Loveliest and best, two lives past.
Both your life and mine!

My father loved music. He also loved young folks and loved to teach music to them. For several years he directed the Methodist Choir, composed largely of young people. Occasionally father would also conduct a 'Singing School.' The only cost to the pupils was the price of the books he had selected for study.

In 1888, Nellie and I were both members of the class which was to close the current term of instruction. I believe it was in March. The evening lesson was over and I stood near Father, close to the door where the pupils were passing out. Along came



Ronald J. Laing, brother; Paul L., writer of this book and Nellie Laing; and Mrs. Frank Ormsby (nee Belle McCormick)

To those who read this supplement, I want you to know it is not written as a part of the foregoing "History of Otisville." The pictures in this book came as a thoughtful suggestion of the publisher after the research and writing was over.

My own Golden Wedding was of course most meaningful to me. The writer alone could ever know the wonder and beauty of our seven-year courtship, and the fifty years of wedded bliss that followed.

The picture of the four taken at the Golden Wedding is remarkable as the four lived to stand together again as they had done 50 years before, and the two ladies could wear the same dresses on both occasions. The writer realizes how fortunate he is that the book can be published in Otisville.



Nellie, about to leave, and she stopped to speak to him. Father turned to me and said, "Would you like to walk home with Nellie?" That is just what I did! We were less than a block from the school grounds when the love bug struck me. Nellie was only 13 years old at that time and I was 16.

In November of the next year, the same bug struck Nellie. We were married April 7, 1896. Then, for 25 years, the most productive part of her life, the rearing of five fine boys, followed. By this time our business had changed to that of furnishing a modern funeral home. Now she began to shine. I had always maintained that a funeral director should have a lady assistant to help in the preparation for burial of ladies and babies. That is where Nellie showed her worth. Here is an example. One day we were called to Genesee to care for the body of a Mrs. Davis, the wife of the hardware merchant.

A couple of days after the funeral Mr. Davis came up to pay the bill. Nellie had helped Paul Jr. in the care of the body, and in dressing her when she was casketed. Mr. Davis said, "Mrs. Laing is a wonderful woman, her smile is worth a million dollars."

Her mother died in 1922, and Nellie assisted me in the care of the body. That was easier for her, as it was for me, than to call in another person to do the work.

I have given you two examples, but there were other helps, oh! so many of them, in which Nellie helped. When night calls came in it was Nellie who was at the phone first. If it was a call for the ambulance, before I could get into some duds, Nellie was at the door with the cot. When we came in from the call, fresh sheets and a pillowcase were ready for us. If the sheets and pillowcase came in bloody, they went into clear water immediately.

Nellie and I were often called upon to sing, which we did many, many times. She played very often as the relatives were coming in for the service and leaving. She was the one to use the tints and other cosmetics. Helpful? You be the judge!

On the 8th day of April, 1946, we celebrated our Golden Wedding anniversary. On Wednesday, April 10, 1946, we had a large funeral from the home. On my return from the cemetery I found Nellie on the couch. On April 21st, she was taken to St. Joseph Hospital, Flint. I did not leave her. Somewhere near 10:00 P. M., April 29, she was gone.

In disposition, I strongly feel that Edna is more like her grandmother Laing than any other of my granddaughters. It is really too early for me to say this (for three of them are not grown up yet) but what I am about to write, I believe, will lead you to believe I can't be much wrong.

When Edna was a senior in Otisville High she was 16 years old. She came to me and offered to keep house for me until she

Nellie, about to leave, and she stopped to speak to him. Father turned to me and said, "Would you like to walk home with Nellie?" That is just what I did! We were less than a block from the school grounds when the love bug struck me. Nellie was only 13 years old at that time and I was 16.

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When Edna was a senior in Otisville High she was 16 years old. She came to me and offered to keep house for me until she

graduated. It was a big undertaking for a girl so young, but she was old for her years. It took no time at all to complete the bargain, so for a year she took Nellie's place in keeping the house for me. She also helped me on the calls that did not come in during school hours. She knew all about Nellie's ways, except in the care of bodies and help at the time of funerals. She worked fast, but her work was always well done. Now, she is an exceptional mother, a really good and wise one.

There is another lady I wish to mention here. She is Mrs. Ralph Stimson (Calista). For two years she and Ralph, after they were married, sang in our Methodist Choir. She is a soprano and he a baritone, and both were accomplished musicians. One Sunday at the morning service she sang the soprano part of what had been written for a mixed choir. The title of the song was "I Saw My Saviour Face to Face". No other person in the world could have sung that aria more beautifully than she sang it that morning. As I watched her, it seemed she really saw the Saviour's face as she sang. I was not alone in being affected the same way.

After moving back to Flint, she sang it again in the large Court Street Methodist Church. She had sung there for many years before moving to Otisville. Ralph, many thanks for the several years' help you gave us, not only in song but also on your violin.



MAX McCORMICK HOME (West view)



MAX McCORMICK HOME

Front view would not have done justice to the architectural beauty because of trees and heavy foliage.

The house just pictured is to me a wonderful house. It had a great part in molding my life. It was built, as you have already read, by Fred Smith, a real genius in carpentry, for A. K. Hunton (Uncle Al to me, for he married the only sister of my mother). It was built, as you will remember, in 1875. I was hardly 3 years of age, but old enough to take the sawed-off ends of 2x4's for blocks, use them to pile block on block till they tumbled down, just as all youngsters do. After Uncle Al and Aunt Mary moved into the house it was a lovely place for me to go to for Uncle and Aunt were so good to me. My little sister Gertrude had been born. She was an adorable baby and both Uncle and Aunt loved her enough so that after she had died at the age of 14 months and their baby girl was born, they named her Gertrude. Their Gertrude was born in this house. My father delivered her.

By 1880, after the lovely pines on the 4,200 acres Hunton and Weeks had purchased, had been felled and made into lumber, A. K. had gone to Georgia and bought a large acreage of Southern Pine land. He now decided it was necessary to move to Detroit where he had built a planing mill. The Otisville home was sold to J. H. McCormick.

It now became apparent the house would become still more related to my life. John McCormick Jr. and I were the same age. He and I saw much of the house together, for I still went there. We played together, fished together in the creek leading from the lakes and bothered by his sister Nellie and her girl friends. They always wanted John and I to play their sort of games, but that could not go well with two boys who had boys' games to play.

On the first day of January, 1883, Weston Averill and I joined the band. The band now became my love and John McCormick and I became separated. Weston (Wes) was now my pal. By 1888, Nellie and I were members of the Methodist choir. This brought Nellie and I together often for the two choir rehearsals were held in her home every week. Before Summertime I was in love. The long courtship was held mostly in the house depicted.

We were married in the evening of 1896 and in the home so dear to Nellie and I.

An inside bower, as it were, had been made in the north end of the parlor.

By 8 P. M. Oscar Raisin, Otisville blind musician, was at the piano, the minister was standing by the bower, the immediate two families were present, and I was at my station at the foot of the beautiful winding stairs.

My heart leaped. Nellie was on her way down. Oscar started the march, his favorite, as I gave my arm. Nellie took it and we were very soon at the bower. (Who ever heard of a bower inside of a house?. My Webster's Dictionary does not mention it as allowable but I ceased writing long enough to search, and find it is all right.)

Nellie's father had long ago given her to me. These were his words, "You love her and she loves you. That settles it." He was not there to hand her over to me.

The minister was ready, our marriage vows were given, and the pledges solemnly kept for fifty years and 21 days.

That is not all the story. After a four weeks honeymoon in Gaylord when we boarded in the fine hotel where Father McCormick always boarded when he spent much time looking after his flour mill business. (He purchased the Gaylord mill after selling his mill in Otisville). We were fortunate in getting the large bedroom he always occupied when there.

On Returning to Otisville we lived with Nellie's folks until we could get ready the rooms back of and over father Laing's office. Here we lived while I worked on Father's farm that I had helped clear while I could regain my health and strength so I could get back to school.

In 1897, I signed a contract to be the principal of the Otisville School. We, Nellie and I, occupied rooms in the McCormick home. January 16, 1898, we were blessed with a beautiful baby girl born in the large bedroom over the parlor we were married in.

We now rented a small house back of the M. E. Church. (This church was wrecked Nov. 29, 1919, by a cyclone). We thought our times of occupying rooms in the McCormick home were now ended, but they were not.

On December 22, after her birth our new daughter died of pneumonia.

In the spring of 1899 the draining from our cellar went back on us and the cellar was filled with water. Father McCormick found out the condition we were in and insisted we move right back to his house, and we did.

Is there any wonder I am so very much interested in that house, and was I glad when Max and Virginia McCormick bought it after the death of Agnes I. Ormsby. It is still the McCormick home.

Few people could guess the perfection that went into the building of it. In the first place, it was built of the very best pine lumber in the world, milled from the Hunton Mill. No knots there.

About as soon as Max and Virginia had possession of the home, I went over to use a level and plumb. My son Kenneth was redecorating the interior. He helped me use the level and plumb. We found the house to be standing as perfectly level and square as the day it was built eighty years before.

Edna is happily married to Leo Pittenger. Their four children are Yvonne, 7; Robin, 9; Daniel, 4, and Lisa, 1.

Besides Edna, I have two other granddaughters now married

and with children. Norma Jean, the elder of the two, is the only child of Douglas, my oldest son. For nine years she has been the queen of the Funeral Home. Her husband, George Robinson, is a graduate of the Wayne University's course of Mortuary Science. He was first a partner. For three years he and Norma Jean have been the sole owners of the Funeral Home. I still have the use of my old bedroom. They have three of my great grandchildren, Jeffery, 14; Paul, 13, and Jill, 5.

The good-will of the Laings went along with the property, and Norma Jean is a natural born artist with paints. I believe she got this talent from her father. He has painted many pictures. She shines as a hostess in the home.

Meredith is Hunton's daughter and my third grand-daughter. She is the mother of a bonnie baby girl. She loves it enough to want another baby so the two can grow up together.

Now comes Paul Jr.'s two daughters, Mary K, coming 10. She already stands out as a real lady. Ann Marie, coming 7, is what Grandpa calls perpetual motion. Hunton's Bethany is another perpetual motion, and so is Elizabeth Jill (goes by the name of Jill), the daughter of Norma Jean. Jill is one of my great-grandchildren.

James, Kenneth's son, married and is daddy of a boy, James II, and a sweet baby girl (first birthday September 5, 1958,) named Jeanean, are also two of my great-grandchildren.

There are grandsons I have not named as yet.

There is Charles, a student at Central Michigan College, Mount Pleasant, with city population of about 12,000, practically the same as that of Flint when I graduated from the old Flint Central High. Charles, in Otisville High, lettered in baseball, football, basketball and track. He hopes to become a coach. Virginia, his wife, is a bookkeeper and typist, working to help him through college.

My son Charles' three sons—Ronald, John and Douglas, are all getting letters in sports, but their spare time, if one could call it that, is largely spent in the musical activities. The three are headed for specialized courses. Ronald is registered for his first year in Michigan State University.

If there is any such thing as being over-proud in one's progeny, I am ready to confess. But how many grandpa's have you known that were or are less guilty than I.

To those who, after finishing the History of Otisville, have read the Supplement, many thanks. When you reach the age of 85 and are a grandpa or a grandma you will be, without doubt, just as I am.

(What has gone before in this supplement must be considered as Laing's semi-autobiography.



Above is picture of the building where the writer commenced keeping store on May 1, 1900, in the east third of the building.

May 1, 1901, the writer went into the middle third, which was a part connected with the west third, where he worked twelve years—thirteen years in all in that building.

The building is still standing.

